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TIMELY RETREAT;

OR,

A YEAR IN BENGAL

BEFORE THE MUTINIES.

BY

TWO SISTERS.

EDunlop, Madeline Anne Wallace - 2

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

SECOND EDITION.

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ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. II.

	PAGE
BULLOCK CART	65
AFGHANS AND CAT	86
KHANSAMAH	106
NEAR DELHI	130
LITTLE HETTIE	157
ARAB MERCHANT	185
OUTWARD AND HOMeward BOUND	242

Directions to the Binder.

CAMP AT MAHARGONG—*Frontispiece.*

PREPARING CORN	<i>to face</i>	4
PUHARIE WOMEN	"	8
VEILED PROPHET	"	119
POINT DE GALLE	"	165

THE TIMELY RETREAT;

OR,

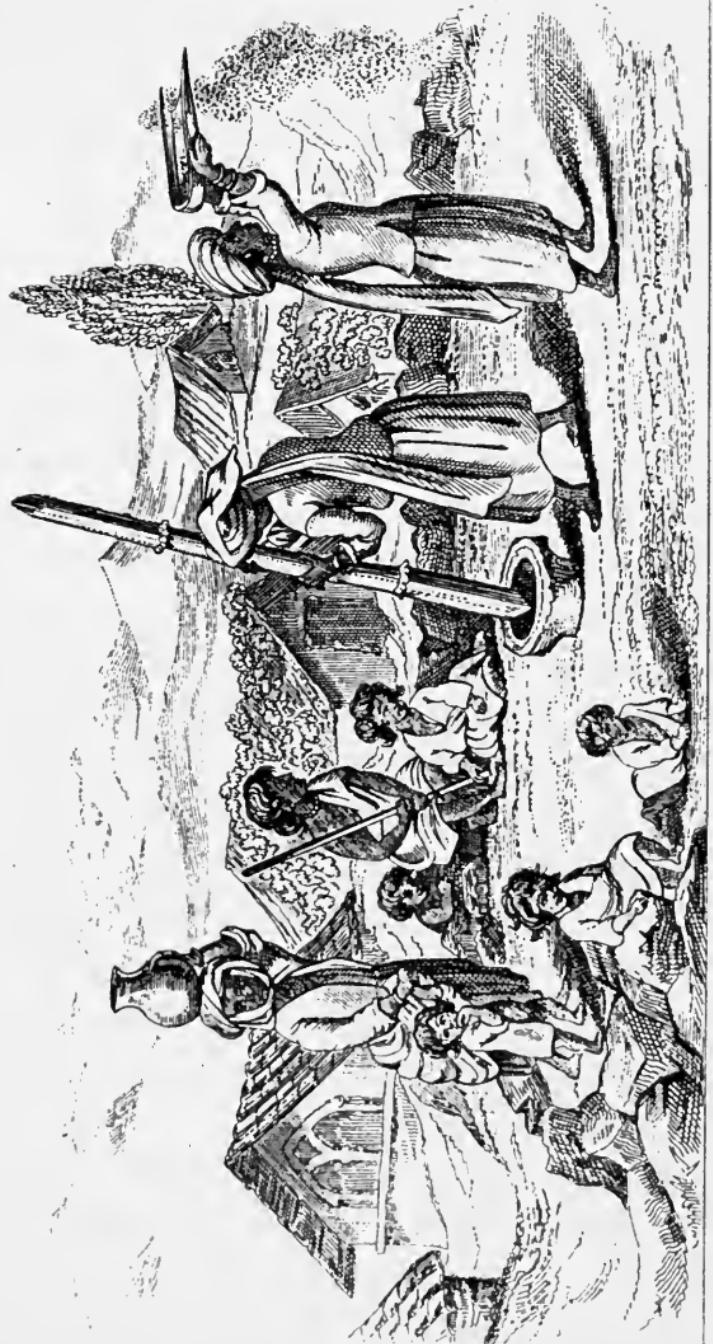
A YEAR IN BENGAL BEFORE THE MUTINIES.

THE morning we left Mahrgong was most bitterly cold, and the frost so severe, our men fell several times climbing up the hill. When we reached the top and were set down to rest, some of the Coolies from the other camp passed us, one carrying a portmanteau. Natives are inquisitive creatures, so he was instantly assailed by questions as to whom it belonged, and informed them the "Lal wallah" (red one). Mr. Atheling, from sometimes appearing in a scarlet flannel shirt, had earned for himself that appellation. You are much better known among

natives by any peculiarity than by your proper name, which they rarely master, making the most ludicrous failures whenever they attempt it. Scarlet is the royal colour in India, and natives are passionately fond of it.

Our homeward path led us past a great many charred trees. Natives travelling are so careless that they will light a fire under any tree, and never think of putting it out; so it often smoulders up the trunk till the whole tree is in a blaze, and sometimes you see a hill-side covered with scorched and blackened trunks, holding up their leafless arms as if twisted and contorted in their last agonies. The most curious of the forest trees presented to our gaze, is that round, shiny, whitish grey trunk, which rears itself constantly before our astonished eyes, sometimes perfectly straight, sometimes taking two or three snake-like twists before rising. I am quite sure if a piece of this trunk was divested of branches, and taken home, few people would guess its origin. I have seen many beech-trees not half so timeworn or

THE VILLAGE OF RAAKER.



covered with hoary moss ; and this strange trunk actually belongs to the common square-leaved cactus, with whose prickly edges our juvenile fingers have so often been painfully acquainted at home.

In returning we avoided the inhospitable Brahmins of Muchkiam, and camped at Raaker instead. It looked a comfortable village, having plantations of sugar-canies and plantains round it, and was not so completely deserted, the head man not being, perhaps, such a strict disciplinarian as usual. When we went to look for sketches, we collected a curious crowd directly. Keith asked one man why he locked up all the women, and he assured us *he* never did so: he used to do it once, but now he had been into Mussoorie and knew better. His people did, he acknowledged. Not knowing exactly what a Sahib could do, they thought it the safest plan to put the women and children out of sight. A woman here showed us the whole process of preparing grain. She was a slight, toil-worn creature; not young, or she would not have

been allowed to talk freely to us. She poured some grain into a deep round hole cut in a stone, then seizing a long, heavy, square stick, a great deal higher than herself, pointed at both ends and rounded in the middle, where she held it, she dropped one end with all her strength into the hole, accompanying each blow with a grunt. Keith took the pole from her and struck two or three blows with it, but she snatched it back again, saying, in a scornful tone, that it was woman's work. The hole being on a level with the ground, of course it got full of dust and small stones, and as the grain sprang out it was restored with a handful of dust. When sufficiently beaten it is put into a little wicker basket, like a shovel with the handle off, and another woman, holding it high in the air, shook it well; till the chaff and the dust flew away, leaving the grain (and the stones) clear.

A stout old woman, dressed in the saffron robes of a pilgrim, occupied herself in directing and scolding everybody by turns: she frightened away two or three groups of

ragged, dirty little imps, whom I was on the point of transferring to paper: no doubt she was the village tyrant. I suppose her pilgrim's attire gave her authority, for the other old women sat passively by. We offered the woman who had been pounding grain for us some money, but she did not seem to care for it. They have little use for money; except to pay the Rajah's tribute they require none, and do not wish to cultivate more corn than they need, or otherwise enrich themselves, as they would only have to pay an increased tribute.

Here stood in two places the trident, emblem of the god Mahadeo, covered with garlands of marigolds, their sacred flower. It is the double pale yellow African marigold, and you are sure to see a plot of it in every village. They hang garlands of it over their doorways, and ornament themselves profusely with its blossoms. One of the first things that struck me in the hills was seeing men walking and lounging about with necklaces and wreaths of marigolds on; while groups of women were working in the fields

without the ornaments one would have thought belonged of right to the weaker, if not in this case the fairer, sex.

All the Puharries (Rajpoots, as they call themselves) keep a race of slaves called Dhoomes, taken originally in battle, I believe. The women are always to be seen dressed in a dark blanket, tied round the waist, and fastened over the left shoulder, the right left free. The Puharries sell their female children openly. Every wife has to be bought. An American missionary told us, when making a tour through the hills, he met a man with a pretty little girl about eight years old. The missionary asked several questions about the child, and at last the man, supposing he meant to buy her, said he would give her for three hundred rupees. He had already sold all his other children, but expected more for this one, as she was the prettiest. These poor ignorant creatures have some absurd delusions. If you look at a woman through a telescope, she instantly sits down, and refuses to move till the telescope disappears. I believe, in old times,

telescopes reversed the objects you looked at, and a knowledge of this kind of glass having just reached the hills, a Puharrie woman believes you mean to turn her upside down, and therefore seats herself to defeat your object. They have a great horror of being sketched, fancying it is some kind of magical process. I was generally obliged to get my figures by stealth, and resort to all kinds of expedients to deceive them as to which one I was taking. If I looked twice at the same person, she invariably got up and went away. They had never seen English ladies before, and it took some time to persuade them we were not "Sahibs."

We met a nice-looking girl, one day, picking those pretty black and red seeds children are so fond of. They were to form a necklace for herself. I begged Keith to try and make her sit to me, which, after great persuasion, she did, incited by the bribe of a little heart-shaped locket I had long worn as a charm, and which had proved itself anything but gold. She and her husband both believed this to be a talisman of value, and

he insisted on her submitting to be sketched, which she did, trembling all over, and with her eyes full of tears; she sprang away like a deer the moment she was released. They wear a loose, short jacket, and a very full petticoat, one end of which is tucked into the waist when they are climbing or working. A quantity of undressed wool is fastened to their back hair so as to make a firm foundation, and round it all is twisted an enormous turban, which makes them look top-heavy, but must be a good shield from the sun, besides making a secure resting-place for the heavy loads they sometimes carry. Keith says in each village they have a marriage turban made of red and blue worsted, larger than an umbrella, which every bride wears for a short time on her head during the wedding ceremony. The women are small made and very active, and they have neatly-cut features. We saw two or three faces at Kutoor that were really pretty. One girl had a dusky glow on her brown cheeks, which, whether it was natural or artificial, was very becoming. They all look well at a little



PHARIE WOMEN RAJPOOTS

distance, but a nearer approach dispels the illusion. Their clothes are filthily dirty, and their hair guiltless of any attempt to smooth or arrange it. The children's hair was full of burrs and grass-seeds, sticking out from their heads like a penthouse. Hill people only bathe on those rare occasions when they pass the Ganges, declaring that water gives them rheumatism.

We crossed the Ganges at Charmah by a rope bridge of peculiar construction. A series of bamboos are tied slightly together by ropes till they are long enough to reach across the river, which is very wide, two strong ropes are swung from two opposite trees, and the lengthened bamboo is suspended from them by a number of thin ropes. You walk on the cane, holding on by the two higher ropes, which is not a pleasant position. The whole bridge swings and vibrates terribly, quite enough to make any one sea-sick, to say nothing of being giddy; while the stream beneath is boiling and rushing furiously, strong enough, they say, to sweep away an elephant. I do not know what width it is,

but I could not manage to make a sketch that took in both ends of the bridge at all, and was obliged to be content with a section only. Keith tried to tempt the dogs to swim over, but they were always baffled, and obliged to return. At last they were carried over, so was the Ayah, much to my brother's amusement, he thinking it far safer to trust to his own feet than to those of a Coolie, with his weight added on to his own. The poor goats were carried over with their legs tied, and screaming horribly. We had four, which always came up at breakfast and dinner in hopes of getting some salt, an article they were inordinately fond of. One poor thing ate some poisonous shrub on the road, and was dreadfully ill. I do not know how the goatman was able to get it on at all. However, next day it seemed all right again, though we desired none of its milk should be sent to our table.

One day we passed a pilgrim from Gungoutri, who, of course, loudly begged alms of us ; and Keith, knowing these men often suffer great hardships on their road, threw

him some small coin, and he contrived even to extract some pice from our poor Coolies. Keith was disgusted afterwards to find he was a very well-to-do Brahmin, who was travelling comfortably with his wife, and a servant to carry his things. This man, some time after, told a friend of ours "he had met Keith out in the jungle with two of his wives," meaning ourselves. The idea of travelling with sisters, I suppose, never struck him. My brother astonished us greatly by telling us that far up in the interior, beyond the bounds of civilisation, and far out of the track of travellers, exists a tribe of people supposed to be descendants of some of the Greek soldiers left there disabled and invalidated by Alexander the Great, when he advanced to the confines of India. They possess the Greek physiognomy in all its perfection, straight nose and short upper lip, and retain their language and religion intact. Only conceive there being yet a people in existence to whom a Dryad is not a name—to whom the lovely myths of classical ages are living realities! These

soi-disant Greeks wage a fierce and vindictive war with the bordering tribes. They have preserved their identity through all these centuries by resolutely putting to death every man who ventures to intrude on their dominions, though they endeavour to entrap and steal the children of their neighbours in order to bring them up to hate the religion of their forefathers. Of course the tribes around return the compliment whenever they have an opportunity. No Englishman has yet dared to penetrate to this remnant of ancient Greece; but Keith, in common with many others, cherishes the hope of some day piercing the veil which has hitherto shrouded it from civilised eyes. He meant to go and live on the confines of the forbidden land till he had in some degree mastered the language and habits of the people, and then trust to being able to disguise himself sufficiently to deceive them. Should he succeed, the enterprise would surely be exciting enough to tempt many a bold spirit to follow him.

Keith, having hurt his foot, had an im-

promptu dandee made out of a tent-pole for two or three days, and tried being carried, but did not like it at all, not being able to reconcile himself to sit resignedly through everything as we did. His men were generally trooping after him, or assisting ours. No doubt, from his being much heavier than we were, the danger of slipping was greater for the men. On one of these days we met a Zemindar, who directed us to go up a very steep hill, and, after toiling up with great trouble, we found we had a difficult and dangerous descent to encounter, during which Keith's men slipped and rolled him out. Then we discovered that we had been made to undertake this extra hour of fatigue and toil by the Zemindar solely to prevent our passing through his village, which lay on our road. He had followed on pretence of guiding us; and when Keith discovered how we had been deceived, he administered some smart blows with his cane to the thick head of the designing Puharrie, who looked quite idiotic while receiving the chastisement, and as if he could not conceive where it came

from. The moment, however, he seemed convinced that it was meant for him, he brightened up astonishingly, and grew overpoweringly civil, insisting on aiding in carrying the dandees and accompanying us some way. This is a purely native trait. The moment you have, beyond a doubt, established your superiority, and shown him you mean to be obeyed, however rude he may have been a moment before, he becomes instantly cringingly polite, and appears to feel a positive pleasure in being tyrannised over. On one occasion, when Keith had travelled far towards Thibet, and was being carried home very ill in a dandee, unable to move, he was set down in a village, and his old Coolies refusing to go any farther, he sent for the head men, and desired them to give him some more; but they, supposing he was quite too weak to resent any indignity, only laughed at him, telling him to get Coolies for himself. Roused at this impertinence, Keith exerted all his strength, and succeeded in springing up and knocking the nearest man down, and then asked him

how many Coolies he could have. "As many as the Sahib pleases," was instantly the humble reply; and the required number were immediately forthcoming.

Whenever we wanted any extra men, the Teree Chuprassee went into a village, and the head man was bound to furnish them; but they would only go as far as the next village, where a new set had to be collected. The promise of money does not incite them to work at all. Some men who had come with us two marches stole away in the night, fearing lest they should be compelled to go on another day, and preferring to forfeit their two days' pay rather than work any more. That Teree Chuprassee always impressed a man to carry his personal baggage, who, no doubt, was never paid. On one occasion, the Coolie furnished for him presented herself in the shape of a girl about twelve years old. The bundle given to her was very light—probably much lighter than the loads she daily carried—or Keith would have interfered. As it was, he knew he should have great difficulty in finding the

lazy father or brother who had sent her as a substitute, and compelling him to do his own work.

The sensation of unbounded space and perfect freedom, added to the exhilarating effects of the mountain air, makes you exceedingly inclined to give vent to your extra spirits, by shouting and singing at the top of your voice. Nora used often to indulge her feelings by going through all the airs and ballads her memory was stored with, and I thought the echoes could hardly have been more pleasantly awakened than when ringing back "Bonny Charlie's now awa'," or, "I would that my love could silently flow." But one day, when amusing ourselves as usual, we were startled by hearing Keith's voice behind us (when we believed him to be miles away shooting) exclaiming, "No wonder the game is so scarce. If that howling is going to continue, you must let me get on in front;" an impudent remark which of course only made us redouble our vocal efforts.

When Keith was out in the jungle by

himself, he never made any arrangements to have letters sent after him : having once or twice, on former expeditions, been recalled before his time about some unimportant business, he took good care now, by leaving no trace of his whereabouts, to prevent any chance of another recall ; but, in pity to our anxieties about our English letters, he despatched a Coolie to Mussoorie, to bring out to us any that had arrived. The Coolie overtook us at Phuror, but our disappointment was great on discovering the stupid man had never gone to the post-office, only called at our house, and consequently brought us nothing but notes from local friends, facetiously directed to "Crim Tartary, or elsewhere;" "To be found between Thibet and Central India ;" "Somewhere in the Interior ;" containing all the latest Mussoorie gossip, but of the home news, for which we were thirsting, not a line. The offending Coolie was immediately despatched a second time, and refound us at Bâla. We received our budget of letters just as night had closed in. How busy people seemed to

be—going to balls, writing squibs, marrying and engaging themselves. As we sat by our camp-fire, talking over all the events described, how strangely difficult it was to realise the difference in our position and theirs; transported in one moment from our little camp, the only spot of civilisation for miles around, to busy, breathless London, and then to quiet country homes, peaceful in general, but just now overflowing with the bustle consequent on some unwonted event. What a marrying fever seemed to be raging in England!—eight young ladies, in as many short months, have taken on themselves the cares and responsibilities of matrimony! We looked at each other with awe-struck eyes, and felt there would be a blank in many homes when we returned. “What with all these girls marrying, and you two away,” said one, “all the young life of our circle seems departed.” Take ten young ladies out of any circle, reader, and what remains? “Come back,” said all the letters; “we are so lonely without you!” “Come back!” the sighing whispers of the

dark forests around repeated the faint echoes of the home voices, and from the mysterious depths of the Himalayan jungles our hearts replied, "We come!" Dear friends, did you hear those earnest promises?

At Bâla we went to look at the trees where we had cut our initials in gigantic letters when going up, and found them looking satisfactory. Keith rubbed them over with some dust and ashes, to make the natives suppose they were some mystical signs connected with religion, and thus prevent any mischievously-disposed person from defacing them. Faqueers always smear themselves, or anything they deem sacred, over with mud and white ashes; and their holy toilet, when completed, is about as disgusting a sight as can be conceived.

We were surprised to find in returning how lightly we looked on dangers that on first starting had seemed almost insurmountable. Our men, too, were now so perfectly inured to climbing, that they scrambled quickly over places that in going out had been looked at with much hesitation. Their

great delight was to get an extra Coolie, a fresh hand, to assist in carrying the dandees, and then make him run the whole way, insisting on going faster and faster, without a moment's pause, till the unfortunate stranger, only accustomed to proceed at a dignified pace, was compelled to give up, breathless and exhausted, while our men, in capital training, laughed and jeered at him for his effeminacy, though, had the spirit of emulation not kept them up, they would probably have been grumbling themselves about the fatigues of the way. It is extraordinary how much exertion these men will endure, and what long marches they will take, when their cupidity is once excited. A gentleman at Mussoorie told us a friend of his, when out shooting in the jungle, often sent Coolies into the station with venison for presents, and, to ensure its speedy delivery while still in a serviceable state, used to promise bucksheesh, increasing in proportion to the shortness of time elapsing between the despatch of the venison and its delivery; and the rapidity with

which these men travelled great distances was incredible. This gentleman was roused one morning very early, by his servants reporting there was a dead man lying at the bottom of the road. He went directly to see, and found two men—one dead and the other insensible, each with a deer strapped on to his shoulders. They had started together from the camp, and, incited both by the hope of reward and emulation of each other, had overtired their strength, and fallen within sight of the end of their journey. The poor creature still alive was taken to the hospital, and, after great care and trouble, recovered. All Coolies are not such willing, uncomplaining beings, however, for I one morning saw one of our dandee men, a fat, idle lad, named Kootoo, crying bitterly, with the big tears positively rolling down his face. We begged Keith to inquire into the cause of such extreme grief, and found it only arose from the pole of the dandee, rubbing on his coarse blanket, having chafed his shoulder; so he was degraded to be a pack-Coolie,

and another elevated to his place. I wonder what English lad of eighteen would have been found sobbing for such a paltry cause !

We saw one day a whole colony of young locusts, preparing, doubtless, when old enough, to come down on some well-cultivated plain and annihilate every vestige of vegetation. Some of them were the pink locusts, and I have heard a flight of them described as a most lovely sight—a glowing rose-coloured cloud. Of course they are just as destructive, though much rarer than the common ones.

Our servants brought notice one evening that some wild dogs had just chased a cow over a khud, and were then engaged at the bottom in eating her. Keith went to look at them, but was much vexed he had not been called earlier, that he might have seen the sport. These dogs are very cunning, and hunt together in packs with an intelligence and combination far exceeding our trained hounds at home. I have been told, but know not how true it may be, that when

these dogs have puppies to provide for, they will not kill their game at a great distance from their holes (they live in colonies), but chase the animals near their homes beforehand, so that they have not far to carry the food for their children.

At Phâdee I got a splendid group of hill women, with most exquisitely-rolled turbans and a superb display of barbaric jewellery; they nearly all wore a nose-ring, and a whole bunch of rings and jingling tassel-like ornaments in their ears, which were pierced all the way up; sometimes a thick heavy chain of silver connected one of the ear-rings with the necklace. We were often struck by the singular and striking character of these ornaments, and wanted to purchase them from the women, but were always deterred by the Ayah, who assured us they were all made in the plains, and when we returned home she would bring us heaps of them from the bazaar. The poor Ayah was certainly glad her jungle wanderings were drawing to an end. Taking no interest in the scenery, she must have found the time

tedious in the extreme; and the Coolies, I am sure, often made her walk far more than was necessary, by pretending to slip, until she became too much alarmed to remain in the dandee. She constantly told us it was "very far," or that "Mussoorie was very nice :" but I am sure no European servant would have been so uncomplaining under so many difficulties. Her muslin draperies, too, collected a double quantity of the endless varieties of grass-seeds, that clung to anything they touched with a pertinacity that nothing but an hour or two of patient and careful picking could overcome. I am certain our party must have scattered acres of these dreadful seeds along our path. Some of them were so sharp they actually sewed themselves in and out of your clothes, and fastened them together like pins. We gave up in despair any attempt to keep our pugherees clear; and the shawls which we threw over our feet in the cold mornings were in such a state as to excite the compassion even of the dandee men, who often spent our intervals of rest in striving to re-

store them to something like their original state. Our veils had long been puckered up in such a manner as to be totally useless. Altogether we must have presented rather a forlorn appearance, and contemplated our entrance into Landour with some dismay. The last night in the jungle we camped near Phâdee, a place chiefly remarkable for a splendid carved wooden doorway, in a style of florid Byzantine art, and for the hut or shop of a most spirited Buniah (native merchant), who has rented all the hill-sides near, and cultivates potatoes for the Mussoorie market: I never saw such magnificent ones anywhere, so large and floury. Keith seeing it was an opportunity not to be lost, ordered a large quantity for our winter supply at Dhoorghur, knowing it would be impossible to get any so fine on the plains. This enterprising man has (in a degree) levelled the path between Phâdee and Mussoorie, so as to make it passable for the troops of little tats who carry the potatoes, when dug, into the station. Porcupines are very destructive to these potato

plantations, finding the roots a most *recherché* article of food. Keith says porcupines themselves are very good eating; they are dressed by being rolled up, quills and all, into a huge ball of clay, then popped into the middle of a wood fire, and when sufficiently done you break open the ball of clay, to which all the quills adhere, leaving the porcupine ready for table. It is nearly impossible to pick all the quills out before cooking it.

That evening we were delighted to welcome back our three ponies, a messenger having been despatched to order them to meet us here. "Tommy Tattoo" celebrated his joy on the occasion by galloping about during the night (as he was never picketed), tumbling over the ropes of our tent, and trying to come in, which, besides awaking us in a fright, disturbed the goats very much, and made them so uneasy, they effectually prevented our sleeping much more, which I was not sorry for, however, as it seemed a waste of time to sleep away our last night in the jungle. Before retiring to rest we had

a very severe thunderstorm, accompanied by tremendous hail and rain. Keith had a trench dug round our tents to drain the wet off; it was most fortunate they were up at all before the ground got soaked.

We discarded our dandees and mounted our ponies next morning with great satisfaction, and recognised each well-known peak as it came in sight, and each little white dot of a bungalow, with all the pleasure of absentees returning home, and, when we reached Landour, could scarcely believe it to be the same place. The paths we had been wont to think so narrow for cantering on were quite broad roads to our uncivilised eyes, and as for the Mall, it was fit for carriages. Everything is comparative in this world. On reaching our house we saw some tents pitched beside it, and found our cousin Ronald had just arrived *en route* for the jungle, too late to accompany us, unfortunately. However, a gentleman never seems to feel lonely with his beloved rifle beside him. As he could procure no Coolies to accompany him, he hoped to profit by the dis-

missal of ours, and when they were all collected to receive their pay, he made them a speech, advising them to join his camp and return again to the jungle, promising to shoot plenty of game for their "Khana;" but the only volunteer such a noble offer secured was our Zouave, who was undaunted by the perils of the road. Keith advised him to offer (as the difficulty of finding men would increase every day, most of them returning to their own villages for the winter) five annas a day, and this princely bribe induced a few sufficient for his camp to forego the delights of rest, and the pleasure of spending what they had already earned, and retrace their weary steps. Ronald took out a whole pack of dogs with him—all ours in addition to his own—and we took possession of our old home, of which, during our absence, the spiders and silver fish had been allowed the entire range. These latter destructive little animals, the bane of ladies' wardrobes, will eat almost anything they can find—linen and dresses, books and papers, nothing comes amiss to them. They are especially partial

to embroidered muslin. Many poor ladies, having packed their best things in tin for the rains, find them totally destroyed, riddled through and through by the sharp teeth of these land fish. As for the spiders, I cannot even now recal them without a shiver, they were so enormous, exactly like those hideous monsters, with black bodies and shaking wire legs, that little boys in London will persist in offering to you for sale. I always supposed they were the fabulous creations of some disordered imagination till I saw the hill spiders, and instantly recognised them as the original of the London penny horror.

Our house at Landour seemed quite extensive, and furnished in a style of unexampled luxury, after the makeshifts of the jungle; yet we returned to Mussoorie feeling it would be impossible again to submit to all the conventionalities of highly civilised life and its accompanying intense stupidity, our jungle experience had made us feel such extreme sympathy with gipsies and other wandering tribes; but the force of habit makes victims of us all, and the very day after our

return to Landour saw us properly equipped for a ride on the Mall. Certainly it was comforting to one's feelings to find oneself again on horseback, and able to take a good canter without upsetting a jhampaun or capsizing a weak-minded gentleman; for the Mall was deserted—all the fashionables had departed, scared by the growing sharpness of the air, telling of the severe frosts in store, and so down they went to the plains to prepare for all the delights of a cold season and its concomitant balls and gaieties.

Our Dhobee and his family had been left in charge of our house at Landour during our absence, and his little son greeted us on our return with a resplendent bunch of last lingering flowers. During Nora's convalescence, this little fellow would appear constantly in the verandah, his red shawl gracefully draped over one shoulder, to present his offering of flowers. One day he advanced in conscious pride of bestowing on us something worthy of our acceptance. This turned out to be some grotesque elephants and other impossible animals moulded in sugar, which

he evidently looked upon as unparalleled luxuries. He would willingly take *bonbons* from us though he was a Hindoo, and ought to have lost caste by touching anything edible belonging to Feringhees; but natives are so fond of sugar in all shapes that they have made a convenient rule for themselves that sweetmeats are only to be manufactured by the highest castes, and consequently everybody may eat them, just as all creeds and castes alike drink water from a Bheestie's mussuck (leathern water-bag). Our Dhobee was certainly a man of substance, for he had his wife and children up to the hills for change of air entirely at his own expense, besides going down to fetch them himself, and paying another man to fill his place during his absence.

At Mussoorie the butchers have an original mode of soliciting orders. Whenever they intend killing an ox or sheep, a list is made out of the various joints and parts of the animal, with the day on which they will be delivered. The list is sent round to every house, and those desirous of purchasing write

their name against the required piece, which generally is well attended to. But one day, alas ! the quarter of lamb did not make its appearance at the appointed time, and the Chuprassee was ordered to go and remind the butcher of our expected joint. This he refused to do, saying he should lose caste. Keith reminded him he was not to bring home the meat, simply to take the message, but in vain. The man declared that as the butcher killed beef and had it on his premises, he dare not go near him. My brother was highly indignant, and gave him his dismissal at once, much to our sorrow, as he had been a good servant in all respects but this one thing. Everybody, however, applauded Keith's determination, saying that the pernicious effects of giving in to caste were too great to admit of the indulgence of it in the slightest degree. I really think, altogether, we treat the natives far too much as reasoning beings. They are so childish in mind, that, like children, they ought to be compelled to obey the orders they cannot comprehend. The benefit of the coercive system

is observable in the difference between the servants and Coolies in Landour and Mussoorie. At the former place, being entirely a military sanitarium, an impertinent servant is sent with a note to the officer in charge of the barracks, and is summarily dealt with off-hand. Consequently, the Landour men, knowing what they have to expect, are civil and obliging; while the Mussoorie people are daily plagued by the insolence of their servants, because the latter know well that, before punishing them, a long and tiresome form has to be gone through, from their masters having to apply to the civil court for redress. Gentlemen, therefore, often bear rudeness rather than take the trouble of going to law about it.

My brother, being disappointed with his sport in the jungle, set off for the Dhoon in quest of elephants, as he had still a few weeks of leave remaining, and Nora and I betook ourselves to reflections on our past adventures and extended excursions in our own neighbourhood. We had often been told of the beauty of the "Murray Falls"—a

favourite site for pic-nics—and determined on judging for ourselves; so, getting a lady friend to accompany us, we started one fine morning with our ponies and one dandee. We had been told we could not get near the falls save on foot; so, as a precautionary measure, left the beloved "Puck" at the Dhobee's village—a singular-looking place, chiefly remarkable for the rows of garments hanging out to dry, "fluttering like snowy banners in the breeze." All the washermen of Mussoorie abide here for the convenience of the clear stream of running water. As we had not the slightest idea of where the falls were, only that they were somewhere in that direction, we thought it desirable to make inquiries, and were informed we had better trace the stream up to its source. This advice was a sheer impossibility, but we determined to get to the waterfalls nevertheless, and by dint of immense perseverance and no small amount of courage, we not only reached them ourselves, but persuaded our marvellous pony "Tommy" to stand at the foot of the falls also—a feat he may well be

proud of, as we were assured no four-footed animal larger than a dog could perform it; but then "Tommy" had more sense than many human beings. But my nerves were destined to be more severely tried than I expected, for, on returning by a supposed shorter route, we came to a bad landslip, over which a slight path had been trodden, sufficient for a man to walk over with care and circumspection, as it was formed of little rolling stones. I was mounted on "Tommy." The shades of evening were gathering, but I could see an unpleasant-looking abyss ready to receive me. I cannot think why I did not dismount, but on I went till, nearly over the bad bit, one of "Tommy's" hind legs slipped, and then both went over the edge. Still he had a good hold with his fore legs, after two vigorous efforts regained his footing, and seemed noways disconcerted at his escape; but, for myself, I felt a most unpleasant sensation of intense fear. While he was struggling I had full time to realise my position, and knew there was no hope for me if he failed in his efforts; and even now it gives me a cold

shudder to think of it. But "Tommy" never feared anything. He had a most provoking trick of dancing on the edge of a khud—nothing would break him of it; so, one day, Keith dismounted, and with great difficulty succeeded in pushing him over, thinking, if it did not kill, it would surely cure him for the future. After a few moments of breathless suspense, he looked over the edge, and beheld "Master Tommy" coolly grazing on a little patch of grass, having fallen about twelve feet, and, finding himself unhurt, he thought it a pity to waste valuable time, so made the best of it. Keith had immense trouble to get him pulled up to the path again, nowise daunted by his adventure; nothing could eradicate his perverseness and obstinacy.

One day, when seated quietly at dinner, a note in an unknown hand was brought us, and the writer, after a long preamble begging us not to alarm ourselves, which of course made us expect the worst, informed us Keith had seriously cut his hand, and so was unable to write himself. A parcel with

two nondescript lumps, one bristly, the other smooth, accompanied the note, and were respectively labelled, "An elephant's tail, and tongue." Keith had, then, shot his elephant; and next day he arrived himself, being unable to shoot any more with his wounded hand. It seems he had tracked the elephant a long way first on "Grog," then on foot, accompanied by the faithful Keniah, and had killed it by a ball between its eyes. It was a splendid animal, with tusks three feet long. He then proceeded to cut out the tongue for our refection, and in further pursuance of "Gordon Cumming's" directions, was commencing to dissect the foot with a kûkri—a scythe-shaped instrument, when his fingers, being slippery, fell with all the force he was using on the sharp blade, and inflicted a ghastly cut; so the elephant's foot is still an untasted delicacy to us. He had to march to Dehrah—a distance of some fourteen miles—to get his wound dressed, and then despatched a Coolie with the tongue and tip of the tail for our benefit. The tongue was boiled—how many hours I should be afraid to state,

but at least the whole day—and we each inserted a scrap boldly into our mouths, and sat patiently chewing a substance much resembling mucilaginous shoe-leather for ten minutes, without making any impression or extracting any taste ; so we decided elephant's tongue might be a rarity, but we should not grieve after it on that account. The tail we divested of its hairs, keeping them as a remembrance ; not that they are a bit like an elegant lock of hair, but each sticks out independently and very strong, about the thickness of a ring.

We were thankful to get Keith back at any cost, even minus a joint of his little finger, as our friends had unceasingly laboured to convince us of the extreme foolhardiness and peril of elephant shooting in the Dhoon, where so many of them are tuskers, and others have escaped from former civilisation, always the most dangerous to encounter. They all predicted, if we ever saw him again, it would certainly be with the loss of one, if not all his limbs ; so a finger disabled seemed a perfect trifle not worth mention-

ing, though Keith lamented that he feared it would be a bar to his boxing; not that he ever had cared for that amusement before, but with a thorough mannish spirit of wanting anything unattainable, and not caring for it unless it is, he now began to have vehement anxieties to spar at everything.

When Keith's encounter with the monarch of the forest became known, all the ladies who still had to perform their journey down to the plains became dreadfully alarmed lest the enraged companions of the murdered elephant should lie in wait in the pass, and revenge themselves for his death. The superintendent of the Dhoon received many moving epistles from the gentle sex, earnestly begging that an escort of Sowars (mounted police) might be provided for their protection.

The palkee bearers are apt to play tricks upon unwary travellers while carrying them through this formidable pass, by occasionally setting down the palkee, and shouting "Heartie!" (elephant), breaking boughs of trees, and making a feint of driving away

and otherwise frightening the supposed animal, after which they return to the terrified individual in the palkee, and demand rupees to a large amount for their valiant behaviour. This is an entire *ruse*, for in the case of a real live elephant appearing, they are certain to drop the palkee, take to their heels, and decamp speedily.

We were told that, as the cold weather came on, we might have the pleasure of encountering a leopard in our rambles, or receiving a visit from a bear some evening, as they are driven by hunger nearer the haunts of men ; and we heard a piteous tale of Mrs. Percy's favourite terrier being carried off one night, and its fate remained for ever shrouded in mystery. So many reiterated assurances made us rather nervous, and set us speculating what our behaviour under such circumstances would be—soon to be put to the proof—for, when returning from Mussoorie late one evening, “Puck” gave symptoms of alarm so unusual in him that my attention was called to it, and a slight rustling directing my eyes, I saw a large tawny-looking

animal, with a long tail, spring on to the path immediately before us, and then crouching with an astonished gaze at us, leaped lightly up the khud and disappeared from sight, leaving us uncertain whether it was a vision or matter-of-fact reality. Some young gentlemen spent a night in the valley at the foot of our house, intent on slaughtering a bear, having often been disturbed by nocturnal growlings round their bungalow, but Bruin was too wary, and though they heard him near, the night was too dark to hazard a shot, lest one of their attendants might be the target ; so with fading visions of bottles of bear's-grease, they were forced to give it up, having caught sufficient bad colds to last them the remainder of the season.

We sometimes saw the hill fox—an animal twice the size of our Reynard, of a silvery-grey colour, with a brush worth a hard day's run. Keith's coming up relieved us of all responsibilities of sending off the crockery, servants, and baggage to Dhoorghur—a proceeding which would have involved a more fluent outlay of Hindostanee than even our

advanced powers were quite capable of; but it was with feelings of regret that we prepared to bid adieu to our mountain home. Those far-distant snowy peaks had become as familiar friends, and their spotless purity and upward pointing seemed like warning sentinels faithfully reminding us of our duty; and all these lovely valleys and beauteous scenery, this free wild life, was to be exchanged for the etiquette and routine of Dhoorghur, which we looked upon only as the scene of all our miseries. But Keith's leave had nearly expired; so, after living a few days in that wretched transition state consequent on a flitting, all was packed, and on a bright autumnal morning we entered our jhampauns bound for Rajpore. Our ponies and all heavy baggage had been sent off previously, but of course a goodly store of miscellaneous articles had to be stowed away at the last moment in each jhampaun, and the Ayah, with her precious charge, the kitten, was to follow in a dandee. It seemed a shame to leave Mussoorie just when autumn was decking her in all her golden

glories, and the clear bracing air gave strength to the frame to bear the heat of the plains. When descending the hill we felt the change considerably in the temperature.

At Rajpore we were packed into a non-descript-looking vehicle to drive as far as Dehrah, half-way through the valley of the Dhoon. Everything here seemed home-like —fields of grain well watered and cultivated, and hedgerows like England, save that most of them consisted of roses now in all their pride of crimson blossoms. We stopped at Dehrah for refreshment, where we found our cousin Ronald awaiting us, and were joined by our unhappy Ayah; her dandee men not having reached Rajpore in time for her to accompany us in the carriage, she had been compelled to walk the whole distance, alternately carrying the kitten, who scratched her arms all over, and dragging it along by a string. Both Ayah and kitten were thoroughly exhausted with their morning's exertions. We then went to inspect the tusks of Keith's elephant. The head had been buried in the Kutchery compound, and the

tusks remained protruding from the surface, and were to do so till decomposition had progressed sufficiently to admit of their being pulled out. A crowd of natives collected to see the Burra Sahib who had done this feat of ridding their sugar plantations of one of its marauders. The black policeman of the village presented us with an offering of sugar-canies six feet long, and branches of plantains.

We drove through the rest of the Dhoon in buggies, and found our ponies awaiting us at the entrance of the pass. Keith and Ronald went on foot, but we had no fancy for such rough work—very fatiguing, and no glory to be gained. The pass, being nothing but the dried bed of a river, consists of huge stones of all sizes, and interspersed with fords, which had to be waded through. The night closed in when we were entering the defile, casting gloomy shadows over our path from the weird old trees and volcanic-looking peaks of the Sewallicks. Besides, this pass is celebrated as the favourite haunt of a man-eating elephant, “Ganesh” by name, who,

having once been subjugated to human control, broke loose one day, and now inflicts dire vengeance on all travellers he meets with. No less than forty people have lost their lives from this infuriated beast, and, notwithstanding the rewards offered by Government for his apprehension, and the efforts of numerous parties of huntsmen eager to distinguish themselves by his extirpation, he cannot be caught. Tigers also are said to abound here; so we may be forgiven casting rather anxious glances at the deepening gloom, and feeling an increased acceleration of the pulses on spying some animal stealthily crawling away, even though it might be but a jackal. Keith urged us to gallop on, saying he always made "Grog" go at full speed; but it seemed sheer madness to do so over such boulders of rock and unsteady ground. His and my cousin's pedestrian powers soon outstripped our ponies, and, by way of varying the monotony of the way, as it was quite dark, Nora bethought her of trying what riding gentleman fashion was like, but found "Puck's" back decidedly too broad for comfort. On

emerging from the pass of the Dhoon, we at once entered on the sandy plains of India, and resigned ourselves to a night of palkee dâk. Being now fairly started southwards, we left pure air and health behind, and were lulled to sleep by the subdued chant of the bearers. On waking next morning, I found I had passed the night in company with three huge spiders—a more serious thing than it sounds, from their enormous size and occasionally poisonous nature. Besides, the dust lay an inch thick all over me, raised by the shuffling manner these men walk.

We now exchanged our palkees for gharries similar to those in which we had come from Calcutta, and everything was precisely the same—kicking horses, &c. But Keith, being known in these parts, caused greater speed on the part of our drivers, and late in the evening we saw the lights of Dhoorghur. Part of the commander-in-chief's camp had already arrived, and the white tents, with their fires and black attendants, were a pleasant break in the darkness of the night. When we quitted

Dhoorghur, at the time of Nora's illness, it was determined not to return to our old house, and Keith had selected another for us, and given orders for the proper arranging of everything for our reception. But, on driving up under the spacious portico, we found everything dark and dreary, all the doors locked, and a frantic amount of knocking only served to awaken a stupid Chow-
kedar, who informed us that, as we had not been expected for two or three days, the Khitmutghar had gone to his own residence in the bazaar, and there were no servants in the place. We procured a native light, consisting of a small saucerful of oil, with a cotton wick, giving out feeble rays, and proceeded to examine the dark and tenantless rooms. All the furniture was piled in the centre of the hall, with the exception of the drawing-room mantelpiece, which was carefully arranged in precisely the same manner as the one at the old house had been. We then chose our respective rooms, and made the pleasing discovery that there were no beds to sleep on, they having been left in

another house. After numberless delays we succeeded in getting a scanty refreshment of tea, bread, and guava jelly, the very name of which makes me feel sick. Our table was lighted by wine bottles, a candle gracefully inserted into the mouth of each; and as for knives and spoons, one of each served for everything. So, tired and weary, we betook ourselves to repose.

In the morning things looked brighter. We thought the house far more cheerful and better arranged than the "Castle of Otranto." The drawing-room was an especially pleasant one, opening on to the verandah, with a huge bay on one side, giving us a bright view of the garden, and, as is usual in most Indian compounds, two or three Mohammedan tombs coming close up to our windows. In a few days our hall was arranged with a splendour calculated to strike awe into the hearts of all beholders. It was a large, lofty room, with the Indian complement of doors and windows, and Keith took the adornment of it entirely into his own hands, he and Keniah daily perilling their lives on the tops

of ladders till all was completed. As you entered, on the wall facing you a huge black bearskin was extended alongside a magnificent tiger ditto. Keith was very proud of this latter skin, as he had shot the creature in the eye, so it was intact. Besides, the day before its departure from this life, it had demolished an old woman. On the mantelpiece beneath were stuffed heads of various species of deer, "snow antelope," &c. The fireplace was a perfect Golgotha for boars, deers, and other animals, flanked by the skull of an elephant hewn in half (a former victim of Keith's); while the centre displayed a tiger's head, with its huge fangs all perfect. One wall was devoted to Keith's battery of guns, with a relief of pistols, ours bearing a conspicuous place. On one side a huge pair of elk's antlers towered over panthers and deerskins, and all the corners had hog-spears, bows and arrows, &c. On a round table in one part, covered with a leopard-skin, reposed in state the ivory tusks of his two elephants, demonstrating a painful fact of the inferiority of the female to the

male, the former being about five inches long, very much discoloured, and ribbed like an old hag's; the latter, smooth, polished, and pure white, with a beautiful sweeping curve. Over the door leading to the drawing-room were two claymores, supporting Keith's arms, displayed on a shield. All together it was a most striking apartment, carpeted with tiger and bearskins, and specimens of native weapons and chain armour filling any vacant spaces.

Our morning rides now were most enjoyable. No longer compelled to rise before daybreak, we were left unmolested till half-past six, and then the clear fresh air, and the remains of hoar-frost on the ground, made one's spirits feel up to anything: besides, we discovered new rides, and found the deserted race-course a charming place for a good gallop. Then, on returning, the house looked quite gay, with every door and window thrown open, bright flowers in the vases, and a cheerful fire in the grate. It certainly was a contrast to the former phase of Dhoorghur life we had undergone; people

all seemed more friendly and sociable, and infinitely better tempered. The Course was crowded every evening; large riding-parties were formed, and every one talked of the approaching balls, which, however, were not to begin till the arrival of the commander-in-chief, an event daily anticipated. Meanwhile the artillery were hard at work practising, and every morning commenced a series of cannonading and bugle-calls, till we were tired of the sounds. The officers talked earnestly of bayonet practice, and the Rifles were getting up a special treat for the chief, in the shape of some wonderful backsword exercise, utterly incomprehensible to us, but which was to crown them with honour if successfully achieved—a fact which seemed mythical to me, from the description I heard of it, as it was impossible for the human frame to put itself into such contortions. The maidaun by the Course was covered with the tents prepared for this important personage, and very gay and pretty they looked, with the elephants and their gaudy trappings stationed about. At last the mag-

nate arrived in the “simple garb of an English gentleman,” his gharrie surmounted by an iron reclining-chair and a brass chilumchee (washing-basin), and forthwith the station went mad. First all the military, inducting themselves into the stiffest of stocks and tightest of boots, were all marshalled and presented by their respective colonels ; then a series of reviews and practisings were announced ; to conclude with a grand field-day, under the command of the brigadier. Two balls and a military dinner were instantly determined upon by the hospitable inhabitants of Dhoorghur, and every house we drove to when paying our visits presented the spectacle of a Dirzee (tailor) surrounded by silks, tarlatane, ribbons, and other materials for finery, wherein the daughters of Eve delight to array themselves. Everywhere and in every manner the note of preparation was sounded, and hospitality on a truly Indian scale was carried on, for the commander-in-chief has a huge camp, with staff and all sorts of

long-named officials appertaining, all of whom had dear and intimate friends at Dhoorghur.

The season commenced with the station ball, given in the Rifles' mess-room. It was a regular subscription-ball, comprising civilians and military. Nora and I having been privately informed that there were but five really good dancers in Dhoorghur, felt doubtful as to our enjoyment of the evening, knowing we could not dance with the accomplished five all night, besides the slight misfortune of not knowing the names of these highly-favoured individuals. On entering the ball-room things looked promising ; the holland was well strained over the chunam floor, and numerous doorways, half hidden in lace and garlands, were suggestive of cooling (*alias* flirting) rooms. All was lighted by several chandeliers, the shades of which had evidently been constructed during the early days of the art of potichomanie, and were looked upon with great complacency by Mr. Hamilton as decided hits ; a sentiment I did not agree in, but

fully appreciated that gentleman's taste and skill in the grouping of the wreaths and floral devices on the walls: nothing could have been more effective or in better taste. Certainly, when gentlemen condescend to such trifles, they generally do them thoroughly well. On examining our cards of engagements we thought the arrangements perfectly satisfactory; innumerable waltzes and galops, with but two quadrilles as rests. The bands both of Artillery and Rifles were stationed off the dancing-room, and took the labour of playing alternately. We soon found the greatest difficulty would be to determine which of all the numerous petitioners for a dance was to be favoured, and thought this first ball a good opportunity of trying their various powers, and making a mental list accordingly. Here, of course, the old expedients are resorted to for evading bad partners, which is not difficult from the superabundance of the nobler sex; still I was not quite prepared for the downright fibs I met with. One gentleman told me that he was just about

to ask a young lady for a dance, when he heard her regretting to a prior applicant that she had not one vacant, at which my informant exclaimed with conventional politeness. The young lady turned to him, saying, "We'll arrange that presently;" and as soon as her unwelcome admirer had departed, she showed her card, with several waltzes disengaged, which she kindly added she had kept expressly for him. Everything was surprisingly like a ball at home, excepting the space; instead of being crowded for room and obliged to stand between the dances, we had free space for the maddest galop, with delicious lounging-chairs and tempting-looking sofas to rest on. We were quite glad to think the whole season was before us, and at least nine balls in prospect; we both agreed that the cold season was decidedly the pleasantest part of Indian life we had yet experienced.

A friend of my brother's had long promised him a juvenile bull-dog, and one day the animal arrived, having travelled some distance with his keeper. He was of

course had in for inspection immediately, and a more ill-favoured brute I never saw. In colour he was black and white; his under jaw protruded till his teeth looked like a wild-boar's fangs, his lips hanging loose, as if greedy for prey, his nose so very *retroussé* that you fancied you might get a peep at his brains, and his eyes small and blood-shot, the under eyelids drooping heavily, and with his wide flat forehead surmounting all, he looked a perfect demon. Keith christened him there and then "Butcher," and we thought we should never get over an uneasy sensation about the ankles in his presence. He was generally kept chained in the verandah of the dining-room, and Keith used to conciliate him with luscious morsels from the dinner-table, which "Butcher" gulped with avidity, his huge jaws showing rows of formidable teeth. At last, after many bracings-up of our courage, we ventured to cultivate his friendship, and on further acquaintance discovered many amiable qualities in his disposition, reminding us of the old tale that the "Beast" was only in the

exterior development. At last "Butcher" was on such intimate terms with us as to be allowed the free range of the house, and profited by his liberty to terrify our Khit-mutghars, lying in wait for them behind doorways and springing out after them, causing the poor men to lift their feet hastily and nervously; but he never did any harm, being still quite a puppy, notwithstanding his size. His bandy-legged appearance looked as if he had not been properly tended by his parents, and had been instructed in the art of walking when by reason of his tender age his limbs could not support his bulk. He looked quite irresistible when dressed for company, with a cocky little black velvet hat stuck over one eye, and an eye-glass suspended round his neck—a style of attire extremely becoming to him—and when led in walking like a Christian on two legs, he sweetly recalled the nursery song of "A Froggy would a wooing go." My brother always made "Butcher" sleep in his room at night, hoping to teach him to act as a watch-dog

when in camp. Certainly "Butcher" showed, like most other animals, a strong antipathy to natives; his own personal attendant he tolerated, but any interference from others caused his lips to curl threateningly in a peculiarly sarcastic manner. It is extraordinary the anxiety soldiers evince to become the fortunate possessors of these ungainly animals. Native dog-fanciers sometimes make a round of the principal European stations, and rouse the acquisitive tendencies of the men by some extra piece of ugliness. They will save months of pay, or, if quite beyond their means, three or four club together to make up the requisite sum, and then in the evenings they may be seen airing their precious bull-dog. No other class of dog seems to possess equal attractions for them.

It amused us highly during the cold season to see the immense care manifested about each canine favourite. Morning and evening their attendant led out for a walk sometimes six, occasionally more, of these valued animals, with little black body-clothes, bound

with red. At night, also, they sleep in them to shield them from possible cold. Everybody keeps dogs, but most of them are chained up somewhere in the compound, and only a wiry terrier or stout King Charles is allowed in the house. I used to pity the poor creatures during the hot season, they seemed to feel the heat so much; indeed most valuable dogs are sent to the hills for change of air. Mrs. Douglas had a pet spaniel, which used always to lie on its back just under the punkah, like a barrel with legs to it.

European soldiers in India seem able to command more luxuries than their comrades at home, and truly they need all they can get, but we were surprised at their extended ideas on the subject of dress. A friend of ours noticed a lovely mousseline-de-soie at Mrs. Ludlam's one day, but, as usual with expensive dresses in India, the price demanded was more than she thought expedient to give, being eight pounds, so she chose something else. On returning to the shop a few days after, she again wished to see the mousseline, but was told that a sergeant had

come to choose a dress for his wife for an approaching “ Soldiers’ Ball ;” he had requested to be shown the handsomest ball-dress, and had forthwith taken and paid for that identical one.

Soon far and near a whisper of “ races ” was circulated. Subscriptions were raised, stewards selected, and every gentleman anxiously conned the contending merits of Arabs, Walers, and Cape horses. Rumours floated about of some neighbouring Rajah with an unlimited stud, and an English jockey attached, who would infallibly carry all before him. Our pleasant morning canters were brought to a close by a huge board prohibiting all riding on the race-course, unless for horses in training, who were expected to pay down sixteen rupees for the privilege. The enormous rat-holes were filled up, the tumble-down stand whitewashed and revived, and a portentous pair of scales stationed in front of it.

The first day’s races were but scantily attended, a ball having taken place the preceding evening, and the fair ladies of Dhoor-ghur were not disposed to rise at seven, after

dancing all night, even to witness the best-contested race in the world. Though it was the cold season, the races always commenced at eight, and never lasted later than eleven, as the sun was then considered too powerful for exposure. I cannot pretend to describe the points of the racers or the beauty of their running. Almost all were ridden by gentlemen riders, and as we knew many of them, both riders and horses, personally, it was great amusement to us on that account. We rode down to the race-course the first day we attended, and found all Dhoorghur on the road—ladies on horseback and in carriages, gentlemen in buggies, natives of every grade, some on respectable horses, but the majority on miserable tats, and many a little family of hopefule stowed away in a howdah, perched on an elephant's back out of harm's way.

It was a gay and busy scene as we mounted the race-stand and looked over the ground. I never saw a more novel sight. The race-course forms a circle, two miles round, and close by the stand are ranged a

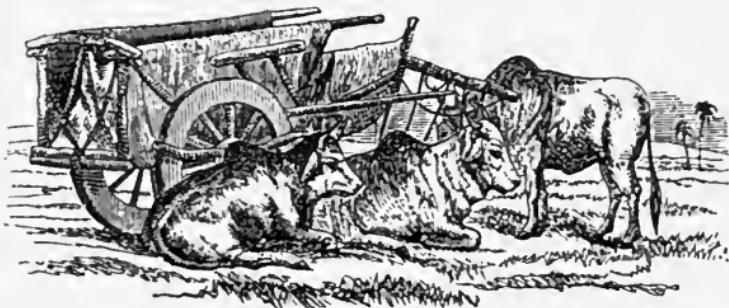
series of huts, built of branches, in which many of the noble steeds are reposing. The throngs of natives dressed in the gaudiest colours, the hubbub and clatter of so many tongues all intensely excited (for natives take a keen interest in races, and I noticed many of our own servants in the crowd), the vendors of sherbets and fruit, who would get in the way, and that miserable dog, the identical one, I believe, that always crosses the course at home as the starting-bell rings. And now the dandified jockeys, throwing aside their over-coats, appear in all the glories of racing-shirts of divers-coloured silks, and such marvellously-fitting boots (not at all like Mr. Wren's). The process of weighing was conducted with the solemnity due to such a serious occasion, each jockey resigning himself like a helpless lamb, conscious that many bright eyes are looking on, amused spectators of his being weighed like a shoulder of mutton. Then the light racing-saddles, having been found correct, are carefully adjusted on the waiting horses. What rearing and curveting goes on—what

impatient dives the restless steeds make at the sea of black beings, which surges back, alarmed for an instant, to press more forward the next, till the clerk of the course waves them off, and breathless excitement ensues. Such betting and odds fly from one to the other till, after an age apparently of suspense, though in reality barely a few seconds, the winner dashes past the chair, and dismounts again to be tried in the balances. All kinds of vagaries and sky-races are permitted. One gentleman, a particularly lengthy and well-developed specimen, insisted on riding his own Arab, though full two stone heavier than any of his competitors, and, as might have been expected, was "nowhere" in the first two heats. The third he allowed another to ride for him, when his horse came in very creditably, though considerably exhausted from having been thus overweighted.

But the European soldiers' races were the most delightful things imaginable, their enjoyment was so thorough and hearty. A few of them had borrowed their officers' hacks, and, in consequence, easily beat their com-

panions; but one and all took off their jackets and rolled their shirt-sleeves up to their shoulders—for what reason I know not, unless to display their biceps muscle—and commenced a vigorous application of the whip, together with positive digging of their heels into the unfortunate horses' sides, from the instant they quitted the starting-post. Some few had one, some actually a pair of spurs, and then, woe to the unfortunate possessor of the creature they bestrode, for its sides were literally scored like a gridiron, rendering the animal unfit for use for some days, not to mention the state of its mouth. It was therefore decided that at the next soldiers' race the winner was to be sold for twenty rupees, which effectually prevented any more lending on the part of the officers.

My brother was obliged to visit a distant part of his district, and, as he was only to be away a day or two, we remained at Dhoor-ghur. Whenever Keith quitted us in this way, he desired us to load our pistols and have them ready; so we carefully deposited



BULLOCK CART.

each case beneath our respective charpoys, quite handy, thereby inspiring great awe and respect in the minds of our Ayahs, but were much relieved to find they were never put into requisition. When Keith returned, he told us he had brought us a new pet, and a serious, solemn owl made its appearance. My brother had been investigating an old ruin, and had disturbed the happy pair. One flew clumsily away, as if not well awake; the other stood steadfast at its post, blinking incessantly, but offered no resistance to its captors. It was a very large bird, with white speckled feathers, a dark-brown ruff round its face, forming a mask, from which its large, bright eyes gleamed like smouldering fires. It was very tractable, and sat complacently

on our hands, but hissed violently when any of the dogs came near, and showed a decided preference for our society in place of the natives. We were rather at a loss to cater for its entertainment, but quails, having been suggested, were luckily procurable, and nightly a few were introduced to the owl, who struck them down and then demolished them. It objected highly to dead game, preferring to kill its own provisions. In the daytime he always maintained a dignified indifference to surrounding objects, and sat peacefully gazing at nothing from the back of a chair, never thinking of flying away, which he might easily have done, as he was always kept outside in the verandah. At night he was more lively, but still preserved a sedate and composed demeanour as be-fitted one accustomed to move in the highest circles of life.

The natives now thoroughly understand that Christmas-time is to be celebrated with all honour, and on Christmas-eve, as if by magic, every compound gate is decked with a plantain-tree (emblem of plenty) on each

side, and garlands of flowers suspended over all. How they get such a number I can't imagine, but they rarely have any roots, and soon die away. Early in the morning of Christmas-day we met in our ride crowds of natives bearing dallies (a large, round, flat basket) on their heads, piled with all kinds of fruits and sweetmeats. Each house is besieged with dozens of these offerings. Keith would not allow one to enter, declaring that if he accepted any, the natives who sent them would expect some appointment as a reward; but many people allow their servants to have the benefit of them. In olden times, when bribing went on, gold mohurs and pearl necklaces were enclosed in oranges or balls of sugar, but those palmy days have passed away. I am certain, had I been a civilian at that time, I should not have been strong-minded enough to reject such fairy fruits. Now, the contents of the dallies are strictly confined to fruits and sweetmeats. The church on Christmas-day presented an unusually crowded appearance, many who rarely attended on Sundays making a point

of recalling the old home customs ; and the road to church was thronged with natives assembled to watch the Sahib-Logue proceeding to their devotions. Besides, service was now at the more reasonable hour of eleven o'clock. Nora and I of course departed, as we thought, in extra good time ; but, oh ! the horror and dismay on entering the church to behold the clergyman just ascending the pulpit ! We had mistaken twelve for eleven. It was too late to retreat : the sound of our carriage wheels had been heard all over the church ; so, feeling heartily ashamed, we were compelled to walk forward to our usual seats, feeling convinced that all the young officers opposite were enjoying our embarrassment, and long it was before we heard the last of our unfortunate mistake.

Mrs. Douglas kindly asked us to come to her house for tiffin to see her dallies, which she had laid out in state in an ante-room, and we found the floor a perfect sea of golden oranges and bananas, rosy apples from Cabul, grapes, shadocks, and custard-

apples, while piles of sugar ornaments, and mountains of pistachio-nuts, almonds, and Sultana raisins, were dotted about. We could only stand in the verandah and look in, feeling quite satiated with the sight of them. I expected Nora to be quite ill from the amount of barley-sugar Mrs. Douglas stored her with, and which lasted her at least a week. Everybody dines with everybody, and each regiment has a huge dinner party on Christmas-day at the mess or colonel's house, at which all the officers and their families are present, in remembrance of the home-gatherings. Dinner parties are carried on throughout the cold season with an eagerness worthy a better object.

There is no subject on which English people talk more egregious nonsense than the Civil Service of India: it is a sealed book to them; they seem incapable of comprehending its meaning at all. A civilian's duties are so varied that it would take a long time and a clear head to make them at all comprehensible to English understandings. In the North-West Provinces, in ad-

dition to the whole judicial business arising from the crimes and misdemeanours of some 1,200,000 human beings,* he has the revenues of a district of perhaps 2500 square miles to collect. In many instances the roads of the district are under his orders ; he has to superintend and often supply the engineering work of all the bridges required ; any public buildings come under his supervision ; any extra work, however incongruous, is always thrown on the civilian's shoulders ; and I assure you the amount of business thus accumulated forms no light weight for a man of moderate health and average abilities. Fancy sitting all day in a hot Kutchery, crowded to suffocation with reeking natives, the punkah over your head just giving barely sufficient circulation of air to allow European lungs to perform their vital functions. The whole day is occupied by hearing native witnesses for various cases, who are all, you know, striving to prevari-

* See the Government Census Papers for the North-West. A judge, not having as much extra work as a collector, has sometimes two of these districts put under his charge.

cate, intrigue, and tell untruths to the best of their power. Perhaps you hear a whole set of witnesses one day, and the remainder for that case cannot be collected for three weeks afterwards ; you have to keep the threads of that and a hundred similar cases in your head, and sift the few grains of truth from the mass of error, and having formed your judgment, write out a whole report in English and send it in to Government. Is it surprising that a wrong judgment should sometimes be given, or that the evidence, dragged in spite of himself from the unwilling lips of the witness, should not sound on paper as conclusive as it did to the magistrate, who was keenly watching the hundred nameless yet unmistakable signs which lead him, by long practice, to divine the truth ?

My brother used to leave home about eleven (having generally got through a number of audiences in his private office), and remain hearing causes in Kutchery till about seven, without the slightest intermission for tiffin or rest. Sometimes he would

be much later, and when I asked what had detained him, the usual reply was, "Oh, such a busy day, and even now I have left seventy witnesses unheard, who must go on in addition to to-morrow's work." I am sure the whole time we were in India, Keith did not accompany us six times on our evening drive. After Kutchery, he had always to go down and visit his prisoners in gaol; at the close of this day's work, was it any wonder he should be too tired to read, almost too exhausted to eat his dinner, or too languid to converse? At night he generally had letters and reports to write out; he said, as he could not attempt to sleep in hot weather, it was better to write then, and sleep as the air grew cooler, towards the morning. Gentlemen have often told me it was totally impossible after work to attempt to read, their mental faculties required absolute repose, and music, whether they themselves performed or not, is a priceless boon to the overtired mind; after an hour spent at the piano, the weary worker finds returning energy enough to try

to eat his dinner. Of course, in the cold weather, all miseries are more endurable; but after some years of this kind of life you meet with depressed and saddened men, with earnest hollow eyes, who tell you they know they have given the best energies and years of their lives to a land that can repay them nothing, and that for all these long, weary years of patient toil, they can never hope at home for even a word of credit, much less fame; the most enviable lot they can look forward to is respectable oblivion. You may strive to answer these moody thoughts with some old stereotyped consolation as "duty is its own reward," but the common-place truism dies on your lips, for the man does not complain, he only states an undeniable fact; and though, doubtless, every man should do his duty without hope of reward, still, who has not sometimes dreamed that the sweet breath of Fame had touched his name and made it glorious? And then their apparently high salaries are far more so in name than in reality. Nearly every civilian I saw was in debt—perhaps a

debt contracted during his griffinage, and which, like an incubus, follows him throughout his career ; besides, a civilian has to keep up a better establishment than a military man, and, as he gets on in the service, he pays proportionately more for every article he requires. Many civilians' wives have told me, when their husbands rose to higher positions, their increased salaries were in reality no saving, for their utmost efforts only showed them more fully how entirely they were in the hands of their servants, who always expect increased wages, and succeed in making the house-bills increase in proportion ; and what can one helpless Englishwoman do, when opposed to a whole brotherhood of natives ? "My coachman left me when my husband was made joint magistrate," said one lady, "because I refused to raise his wages ; but he is a very good coachman, and I advise you to take him ; but as your brother is collector, of course you must give him more."

In Calcutta, to such an extent has the ra-

paciousness of servants risen, that a lady assured me she found it made very little difference if they kept open house or lived quite alone; and now some families prefer having all their meals from a *traiteur*, by which means they can, at least, calculate exactly what their expenses will be. Keith used just to cut off a per-centage from the weekly bills presented to him, saying his time was too valuable to spend in looking over accounts; and whatever you choose to deduct from the sum total the Khansamah gives you, he appears to acquiesce in most willingly, knowing, no doubt, he can easily make it up in some other way. When a civilian rises to a very high post, of course he may save money if he can keep his appointment; but how often does failing health compel him to return home just as the prize is in his grasp? "I am out of debt," says my brother, "because I am unmarried; but how civilians with families manage I cannot possibly conceive." And, after all, when a man has toiled hard in this pestilential cli-

mate for twenty years,* and finds himself a judge or collector, with two, or perhaps three thousand a year, surely had he worked as hard in the law—the nearest analogous profession at home—he might have achieved an income nearly equal to that in a good climate, with all his friends and children around him; and none, save those who have tried it themselves, know what the exile gives up.

There are many military men who contrive to live in India, and pay off their debts, on what sounds a mere pittance (nay, even aid relatives at home); but then an officer has the mess to go to, which takes him out of the hands of his servants. He need only ride a small tat, which costs him little to buy and less to keep; he may live, if he chooses it, in a tiny two-roomed bungalow. No one ever thinks of his entertain-

* There is sometimes as much luck in the civil as the military professions. Some men rise to be collectors after eight or nine years' residence in India, while many are still only collectors after twenty years' service. A civilian is obliged, during his term of service, to pay up to Government, out of his salary, the half of his retiring pension of 1000/. a year, or he must retire on a smaller pension.

ing anybody, and every article he buys he gets at a much lower tariff than any civilian can. If a subaltern, with no private means, is married, his life, without doubt, must be a hard struggle; yet there are many young couples who have nobly fought their way to competency through a long pressure of debt and difficulties hard to realise; yet the anxieties of such a life are so great it seems very rash to risk it at all. More than one senior officer's wife has said to me that she would never advise any girl to marry a subaltern, nor would she ever consent to a daughter of her own doing so; for though she was now at rest, yet she had herself passed through the ordeal, and knew by sad experience what a wearying and painful one it was.

About a week after the conclusion of the races, a steeple-chase was arranged to come off very shortly, and on the appointed afternoon Nora and I, with some friends, rode down early and went over the ground, inspecting the fences and ditches got up for this special occasion; and some very ugly

ones there were. On reviewing the line of country chosen, we found that, as it was in a semicircle, by riding inside we might have a chance of keeping up with the race, and watching the progress of it thoroughly. There were two rivulets to pass, and Nora's horse having a great objection to crossing water, which she was not aware of before, walked quietly into the stream, but positively refused to come out, and evinced a strong determination to lie down. In vain she used her whip; numbers of spectators gathered on the banks, all giving her advice; some sent their Syces into the water to pull the creature out, but he invariably rolled them over in the slippery mud, till one gallant officer came to the rescue: hastily dismounting, he rushed into the stream, and, seizing the reins, belaboured the horse with his heavy hunting-whip till it was forced to yield to his will. This taught us to station our Syces as guards at the brooks, to select the narrowest part for crossing. Six gentlemen appeared at the starting-flag, and it was a pretty sight to see the horses taking

their leaps so lightly and gracefully. But the wonderful field that followed them! At least a hundred and fifty individuals rode along the course marked out; people I had never seen before started up, and all in the last stage of excitement, giving gratuitous hints to the riders. One gentleman, the owner of a running horse, was considered by some people as little less than an Adonis; but fancy Adonis in top-boots and an old battered black wide-awake, securely tied under his chin by a white silk handkerchief passed over the top of it, gipsy fashion! He kept shouting advice to the rider of his steed, which he afterwards acknowledged he knew could not be heard; but he was so excited, he only succeeded in losing his voice so completely, that by the end of the race his mouth was seen opening and shutting, but no sound issuing. There were some apparently dreadful tumbles, but as the individuals spilt picked themselves up and mounted again, I conclude they were not damaged. The winner got a fall that might have been very serious, as his horse rolled

over him; but he went ahead again, and very glad we were to see him win. He received the congratulations poured on him in the coolest manner, as if it was quite an every-day thing. The last gentleman who arrived was extremely heated, and objected to the race, stewards, ground, and, in fact, everything; but he, too, was soon soothed down, and forgot his supposed grievances. Keith was not there, but he heard the full particulars of it next day in Kutchery from the Zemindars of the parts ridden over, who entered a solemn protest in court that "the Feringhees not only came riding all over their crops, but would keep tumbling off their horses and rolling on them, on purpose to cause more serious detriment to the oil-seed then springing," and begging Keith to serve a notice of trespass against all concerned; but as Mr. Percy, the commissioner of the district, himself had helped to trample down the seed, my brother advised the men to apply to the winner of the race (as the chief causer of the damage) for some compensation, which was readily given them.

These steeple-chases are a favourite amusement in India, where any excitement is so eagerly entered into, and many a dreadful accident happens at them, but nothing will warn these adventurous spirits, or teach them to value life and limb more than the chance of obtaining a silver cup.

A sale of cast-horses from the Government stud was advertised, to which Keith and one of my cousins went, more for fun than from any serious ideas of business. We were very anxious to have accompanied them, but as it was not "the thing," had to stay at home. In the afternoon one of the Chuprassees rushed in highly excited about the horse the Sahib had bought, which four men were bringing home, as it was "bhote nut-khut" (very wicked). I thought of the "old man and his ass," and concluded at least that each man had a leg, so we went out to see the novel sight, and met a slightly-made, graceful-looking chesnut, with his head bandaged in all directions, and ropes thrown over his body and fixed to his legs. It seems they had taken the bit out of his

mouth at the sale, and being a young colt who never had had one on before, he so rejoiced in his regained liberty, that it was impossible to replace it, and natives are so timid about horses. At last the dangerous beast was lodged in our stables. He proved a most gentle animal, for, after a fortnight, my brother took him out saddled one day, and on returning told me I might try him if I liked—a permission I gladly availed myself of next morning, and, after being kept half an hour by his highness positively refusing to let me mount, rearing determinately, I accomplished it, and found him wonderfully good. I must say I was very careful, as that evening there was to be a ball at the Commissioner's, and I did not wish to appear with a broken nose. This ball was one of the best arranged I ever saw: the dancing-rooms were so spacious, and the music of the band came in softened tones from the verandah; the pillars between the rooms were wreathed round with flowers, and branches of ripe oranges hung in tempting clusters from the capitals; a

wide corridor, with crimson draperies and sofas to match, its only ornaments some tall, white alabaster vases, wreathed with vine and the gorgeous scarlet poincettur-leaves, led to a luxurious tent, carpeted with Cabul rugs. Here were the most tempting ottomans and low chairs ; a solitary lamp hung from the centre ; and it seemed a most favourite resort. I must say young ladies in Bengal are allowed great latitude. I believe on the Bombay side this is not the case, but I had thought my London experience had qualified me to be a judge—certainly my mind expanded wonderfully in that universal forcing-house—but Indian young ladies beat all my wildest fancies could have pictured ; and were I to repeat some of the tales I heard, I doubt if I should gain credence from England's daughters. I conclude it is the remnant of a chivalrous feeling which prompts society in India to look with indulgent eye on the wild freaks of young unmarried girls ; but should any heedless matron, however young, dare to overstep by so much as a hair's breadth the dignity they have laid

down as necessary, she is watched by Argus eyes, and her short-comings are rigidly censured. I used to feel sorry for the married men, who, about two o'clock, would commence haunting the doorways with their wives' cloaks over their arms, whilst the ladies went steadily dancing on, regardless of darkening looks, boding signs of a matrimonial tiff. Nevertheless, husbands are a better-natured race, in some respects, in India; they are not ashamed of acknowledging that they care somewhat for their wives; they feel how indispensable mutual forbearance is, and the dependent state they are in for sympathy, and they seem to cherish their domestic ties more closely than our John Bull thinks fashionable. But woe to the unhappy wife who breathes her last on Indian land! she may sleep in the perfect consciousness that before two months have expired her "James" will be recruiting his spirits at balls and dinner parties, flirting with the youngest girls, till a decent time (often not even that) has elapsed for him to take to himself another wife. I always felt glad when such cases caught a Tartar. I

know not if the climate, enervating the system, prevents any shock being severely felt; I can only state the well-known fact, and many wives have acknowledged that tender and good as their husbands were, they knew that, should anything happen to them, a successor would be appointed within a year.

We saw several handsome Persian cats at various friends' houses, and were forthwith fired with a determination to take one home. So Keith desired the Chuprassees to be on the look-out, and give notice at all the serais (native inns) where the files of camels and their masters put up. These Cashmeries and Afghans come down in numbers during the cold season, bringing cats, grapes, apples, and pomegranates from Cabul, shawls and woollen stuffs from the far-famed valley of Cashmere. Several members of the feline tribe were brought for our inspection, but were rejected, as being ugly, or of doubtful pedigree. One day a man came to the house with a long-haired cat, pure white, and those China-blue eyes, like Thackeray's "Rowena," but we did not consider white a

good wearing colour, so dismissed him ; and soon two Afghans arrived with a noble-looking animal—a dark tabby, with a calm,



AFGHANS AND CAT.

majestic, lion-looking face, and such a tail ! His whiskers were perfection, and might have been the envy of any elderly gentleman. The poor men were travel-worn and footsore, and glad of the rest in the verandah while the treaty was concluded for the transfer of "Zâwur" (Persian for jewel) to our possession. Our new property was placed under the special charge of the Ayahs, and was tied up in our verandah. Natives are generally kind to pets, and the little kitten we had brought from Landour

was such a favourite with our women, that we presented it to them. “Zâwur” manifested a supreme contempt for the dogs, never noticing “Butcher’s” presence, unless he advanced too near, when a portentous hiss and a general ruffling of all his long, wavy hair, had such an alarming effect, that further warning was unnecessary. My cousin Ronald, knowing that we were in quest of a cat, and not aware that we had obtained one, sent us a jet-black creature; he had taken some pains to procure it, as pure black is difficult to meet with. We immediately christened it “Kala Motee” (Black Pearl), and a more demoniacal-looking animal I never saw—bright green eyes gleaming from its sable fur, a very *retroussé* nose, and a particularly active and energetic disposition, never still for two seconds; it was an immense contrast to our stately, noble “Zâwur;” and then the howling the thing kept up night and day, till its voice became so hoarse it sounded like the barking of a dog. They were both kept chained up with leather collars round their necks, such a contrast to the manner in which feline animals are

treated at home ; and when brought in for inspection to visitors, “Motee” would fling himself down with all the petulance of a passionate child, while “Zâwur” solemnly regarded the strangers, but was too gentlemanly to evince surprise or any strong emotion.

As for the language, we got on wonderfully well with the Ayahs. We could really hold some long conversations on jewellery and such matters, though the woman was sometimes obliged to pull her chudder (veil) over her face, and retire into a corner to indulge the laugh she could not restrain, yet dared not exhibit openly to us; but I rarely could make a Chuprassee, or man-servant, understand any but the simplest things. Before leaving England, our friends had given us “Forbes’s Manual” to study; but we found it utterly useless, and we were laughed at for using its phrases, and told it was all very well for people going as envoys to the Court of Persia to speak in that style, but it was very far above the comprehension of common servants. The few words I learnt

on board the steamer going out did me good service, and we found great benefit from a very useful little book of "Bannatyne's," published by Madden and Co., 8, Leaden-hall-street. It is a most portable size, and generally contains just the word most wanted. Hindostanee itself is a frightful language, only sounding pretty from the rosy lips of little English children, a medium that might beautify any jargon. When I first heard ladies speaking it, I thought they were always seriously reprimanding their Ayahs, and gentlemen appeared continually administering grave remonstrances to whoever they were addressing, when perhaps they were simply giving their orders ; and when two natives get together they seem positively to scream with passion, and then you find it is probably only a friendly colloquy. Keith had a most absurd horror of a native's coming near him : he declared he could detect the copperish smell of the colouring matter in their skins the instant they entered the room, and he would much sooner be touched by a toad than by

one of their clammy hands. He always said they were like moorghies, and had no circulation in their legs; and certainly it seemed true, for in the hills, when the plains men suffered dreadfully from the cold, however many blankets and wraps you gave a man he at once rolled round his neck and head, leaving his legs quite bare.

During the cold season there was a succession of balls, and though, on the whole, we found many as good dancers as those at home, there were, of course, exceptions. So we determined to have some practising evenings, and very amusing they were, as we did not exclude a few good dancers. We had a small dinner party on our first evening, and some of the "nobler sex" looked decidedly nervous, not being quite sure of what we meant to do to them; but the kindly influence of champagne assisted them in recovering a slight portion of equanimity, and when the evening guests arrived, we were all tolerably at our ease. In this house we were not blessed with a Calcutta matting in our drawing-room, so we had a

stuff like holland strained tightly over the carpet, reminding us of the merry days of old, when, with a party of cousins, we used to dance in line across the slippery surface to strain it tighter. The proceedings were commenced in orthodox fashion by a quadrille, after which the business of the evening commenced. The "awkward squad" were called out, and a line of black coats formed at one end (no one wears uniform at private houses unless the general is expected), while my brother, who seemed strung on wires, dislocated his joints, and shook them all in a limp manner as a commencement. A polka mazurka was then suggested, which is very little known there, and they all looked absurdly rueful trying to master its difficulties. Not one could hold his foot out without catching at his neighbour or tumbling ignominiously over, and some looked very like huge spiders sprawling about; others were far too stiff and dignified to join in such childish proceedings, but contemptuously watched their more good-tempered and enterprising com-

panions. One overgrown schoolboy, who looked eighteen, soon mastered the step, and capered about in front of a cheval-glass in great exultation. He was at once promoted to sub-assistant and instructor of the others. But how could we, in one short evening, correct such clumsiness as was exhibited? How "Brown" would dance with his head hanging as if to butt at his neighbour's; then "Jones" kept one bar on one spot, and the next took a run round his partner, who had to keep up a series of hops to avoid having her feet annihilated; while "Robinson" reposed his head peacefully on one shoulder like a crow examining a marrow-bone. As for *time*, but few knew the meaning of the word even; indeed, the bandmen themselves had but a glimmering notion of it. Through the kindness of one of the Rifle officers, we were enabled to have six of the band whenever we liked, and they, being Europeans, did not object to be separated, and, for a consideration of rupees and unlimited beer, they consented to do their best. At our first evening Keith im-

prudently allowed them champagne, which caused such very misty and jumbled airs to ensue, that we thought it prudent in future to abstain from such exhilarating fluids.

Owing to the want of those useful places we have in England, where any amount of rout seats can be obtained at the shortest notice, people in India are content to borrow of each other, and very willingly the help is always extended. Whenever we had a party, our friends would send us vases of flowers, ready arranged, or anything we might be in want of; but it used to amuse us when, on the morning of each ball night, a number of Coolies would arrive, and forthwith hoist our crimson ottomans on their shoulders, bearing them in triumph through the roads to the ball-room; they fairly earned the title of travelled sofas, and I would they could tell all the tales that were told to them in the shady verandahs, or dimly-lighted refreshment tents.

And now I feel inclined to linger, as I draw near one of the most touching scenes of our Indian life, namely, the parting with

Mr. Wren. He was no longer my brother's assistant, having received another appointment, but having lately been seized with an antiquarian fit, which prompted him to explore Delhi and other old cities, he had kindly looked in upon us to bid us a last farewell, before withdrawing the light of his countenance entirely from our existence. Very little passed on the occasion, as most deep feelings are tardy of utterance, and I was beginning to fear lest we should have a scene, when by some strange chance the word "grapes" was mentioned. It was cheering to witness the light that instantly broke over his face as the intelligence greeted his ears, while he eagerly demanded, as a parting request, that we would let him have some for his journey; and we, thankful to perceive that he retained his simple tastes and habits to the last, made (metaphorically speaking) a vineyard of his dâk gharrie, and sent him rejoicing on his way. But, seriously, when he had fairly departed, we were really sorry to lose sight of him; his never varying good-humour, under any

amount of quizzing, proved him of true metal, and should he ever take upon himself the cares of a household, may he be as happy as he deserves, for he has all the qualities of a brave and generous spirit.

Our verandahs were studies worthy a naturalist's attention. In one, "Butcher" and a terrier abode, in another, our two Persian cats and the Ayah's kitten, while a third contained a perfect menagerie : firstly, the owl, motionless and calm on his chair-back; hanging in a wicker cage above was a vivacious hill minah—(these birds resemble our blackbirds, and are great favourites with the natives, being supposed to possess more loquacious powers than parrots even, and they certainly have a more human-sounding voice, but owing to the peculiar diet they require it is almost impossible to bring them to this country); then came a squirrel in a spacious mansion, resembling a Gothic building, with a turning apartment at one end, but as the said squirrel had teeth like needles, we were rather afraid of him; and lastly, the greatest pet of all, a bright green parrot.

These parroquets are very common all over India, their chief beauty being a black ring round the neck, verging to pink at the upper part ; they have long, fan-like tails, and cherry-coloured beaks. This one was a present to us, and we did not at first know half the value of our beautiful "Rose," as we had always been told that country parrots could not talk, but we soon found "Rose" had received an education of a very high order; her principles, also, had been very well attended to, and I never heard any, even the long-famous grey parrots of Africa, talk with the distinctness and fluency of our favourite, besides being of so sweet a disposition ; always left at liberty, she sits on our shoulders, and eats from our lips as gently as a dove, never dreaming of biting, or being cross in any way.

We often heard the officers at Dhoorghur speaking with enthusiasm of "that day's hunt." "What a splendid run we had to-

day ;" and "How well the hounds turned out that last jackal" (the Indian substitute for a fox), till our curiosity was strongly excited to see these wonderful hounds, and ere long our wish was gratified, for on one of our morning rides, seeing a cloud of dust surrounding a decrepid-looking native mounted on a feeble-minded white pony, we rode up to see what was the matter, and discovered the celebrated pack had been sent out for their morning airing, and a most edifying sight it was. Though these dogs are collectively spoken of as "hounds," it does not at all follow that the pack boasts many members of that aristocratic race ; no, its ranks are open to the admission of any plebeian dog that promises to "run well," and with that love of nomenclature peculiar to Anglo-Indians, they are derisively denominated a "bobbery pack." You behold, marching in loving fraternity, a few couple of genuine hounds with a few of dubious

parentage, then a wise-looking poodle, with two or three long-eared spaniels, a party of wiry little terriers, and some unmistakable pariahs ignominiously bringing up the rear. After having inspected the pack, we felt rather curious to see how they would act in the field; besides, we heard such mysterious hints about "that wonderful drag we ran into D.'s compound," and hailed with delight the announcement that the officers meant to give a "ladies' day," and carefully looked to our saddles and girths in anticipation of a hard run. The native equivalent for a rat-catcher was ordered to entrap some jackals, which were placed in a pit to be in readiness, and on the appointed day we rode to the place of meeting, and found the gentlemen of the hunt collectively, and the owners of the pack individually, electrified by surprise and overpowered by delight at seeing six ladies prepared to take the field. The gentlemen were attired in various cos-

tumes: a few top-boots appeared, but the pugherees were universal and startling—red, green, and blue—sufficient to strike any jackal's heart with terror. These latter unfortunates also arrived at the meet in strong canvas bags, and one being carefully turned out, it wisely made towards a sugar-cane plantation perfectly impenetrable for us. A false alarm of jackal being given at one side, we had the pleasure of riding over a cleared cane: the sugar-canies having been cut off in a slanting direction, about three or four inches from the ground, you have a continual succession of sharp hard spikes, which, in the mad gallop after a jackal, often irretrievably lame the poor horses. The first jackal being now quite lost, another was set loose, and ten minutes' grace allowed it; then some of the dogs were held with their noses to the ground, and the jackal having been previously well rubbed with aniseed to prevent mistakes, they started tolerably cor-

rectly, though their animal spirits led them to perform sundry gallops round different fields, barking joyously, while the aged huntsman, with his long red coat and miserable pony, was quite unable to restrain them; indeed, I should think his Hindostanee version of Pompey, Sholto, &c., must have been rather puzzling. Two or three dogs resolutely set their faces homewards, turning a deaf ear to some melodious notes from a cracked horn, surreptitiously produced out of an officer's pocket and performed on when he thought no one was looking. In the mean time, most of the huntsmen were pursuing the jackal on their own account, the scent being so strong it was easy to do so. At length some of the dogs coming up with the persecuted jackal in a wood, pounced upon it, and the poor creature, being probably stiff from its long confinement, and most likely sick from the nasty smell on its fur, offered no resistance,

and when I rode up I saw the dogs pulling about a muddy object, which I had no idea was meant to be the jackal, till a gentleman came up and presented me with its brush, I having been the first lady up. During the *mélée*, the third jackal having made its escape, the leaders of the hunt told us we were to follow a “drag.” In my ignorance, I thought we had been doing so after the aniseed; but this time the animal’s head was cut off, tied to a long string, and the aged huntsman sent on with it a long way. In the mean time, our party amused themselves by leaping mud walls and such pastimes, till the signal was given for the dogs to be loosed, and after a few minutes we followed. But the run was not of long duration, though commencing with a grand burst; it was suddenly brought to a stop by our nearly riding over the pack, huntsman and all, he having stopped to lead his pony through a gap in the hedge (never thinking

of rashly leaping it). The now excited pack came up with him, and being unable to distinguish the drag from the huntsman, from the strong smell of the aniseed they had been incited to follow, which surrounded them both, were proceeding to treat the old man very unceremoniously, when, fortunately, the possessor of the melodious horn arrived, just in time to call them to order, and the day's proceedings were pronounced as terminated, and we were at liberty to canter homewards, after a very merry day, and feeling much edified by the new light thrown on the noble art of hunting.

Of course the whole station was in a fever of excitement about the subject for some days, and one lady was so roused by it that she took the trouble of sending an express Suwar out to her husband (who was in camp at the time) with a brilliant account of the whole affair; but the ungrateful man, being slightly startled by the appearance of an un-

expected messenger, and knowing the hunt was to come off that day, instead of being grateful for the attention, was extremely disgusted and disappointed to find that no one had broken their necks, or otherwise come to grief. After this, we had several days' hunting at Dhoorghur, and enjoyed them very much.

That well-known beverage "Bass's Pale Ale" we had been told was a necessary of existence to ladies as well as gentlemen in the East; but I beg leave to observe that very few people *I* met with touched it, and as for "young India," it infinitely prefers claret, both as a cooler and more aristocratic liquid. We had been brought up on strictly hydropathic principles, and with the exception of some port wine administered to Nora during her illness, we never deviated from our simple rule. A lady who had resided twenty years in India told us she never had drunk any beverage stronger than tea

during the whole of that time; and many similar cases I heard of. Soda-water is the article most in demand in the north-west, with a suspicion of sherry or brandy with the old hands. Bottled cyder I often saw drank; the introduction of the light foreign wines has been a great boon, and they are deservedly popular. Beer is the usual drink called for at tiffin, though not in anything like the quantities formerly imbibed, the younger men being fearful of increasing their size and becoming too heavy for racing purposes, the elder dreading gout and other illnesses. Some infatuated beings still hold to its efficacy in cases of fever, declaring that had Nora swallowed a bottle of it at the commencement of hers, it would have stopped it at once; which was highly probable, as, in my opinion, it would have finished her altogether.

As my brother never touched wine nor beer, he was naturally exceedingly particular

about the quality of his tea, and believed he had discovered perfection in that article when he first drank the Dhoon tea. This tea has a most peculiar flavour, exceedingly disagreeable at first; but after you acquire a taste for it, you can drink no other. It is so very strong that Keith often said it was not tea at all, but a revivifying fluid, under the influence of which he could encounter great fatigue. The natives look upon all tea as a kind of universal panacea for every species of illness. When they are ill, they come to beg for it, and will take it from your hands as if there was no such word as "caste." As far as regards dewai (medicine), however, they have made a kind of wholesale and convenient exception; and if the drug is given to them dry, that is to say, in pills, or dropped into their own brass lotas, they will take medicine from anybody. They consider tea as a very powerful dewai, and swallow it with avidity. The climate

of the Dhoon seems very favourable for the growth of tea, the plants becoming productive very quickly; but it is still grown only in small quantities, and as it is expensive even on the spot, it will probably be a long time before it becomes at all well known in England.



KHANSAMAH.

Mr. Douglas having often asked me to

take a portrait of his favourite old Khan-samah, who, finding the fatigues of his profession too great for his advanced years, was going to retire into private life. I went up to the house one morning to have a sitting, and found him a venerable white-bearded man, with a very Jewish type of face. He was in a flutter of excitement at the unexpected honour done him, and very anxious to go home and dress with befitting splendour; but this his master would not permit, being desirous of having an every-day remembrance of him. He was a horrid old rascal, however, notwithstanding his demure looks. He had been upwards of thirty years in Mr. Douglas's service, and acknowledged to having saved 30,000 rupees out of a salary of 14 rupees per month. His secret would be worth knowing. Mrs. Douglas told me, when she used (as is common with most Indian ladies) to take the weekly accounts from him she sometimes objected to the

extortionate amount of the bills, and was told by that hoary storyteller that he only brought the small bills to her for payment the large ones he paid out of his own pocket.

A lady told me that on going into her dining-room one night very late, when all the rest of the household were supposed to be in bed, she met the Khansamah carrying off a large cup full of sherry; not choosing to speak to him herself then, she sent her Ayah next morning to know "what he could have wanted with wine at that hour?" and was informed that, having forgot to feed the turkeys during the day, he had thought it better to give them some wine for supper! Many ladies, by way of checking their servants' accounts, always write down the weekly bills themselves; and Keith declares he has heard young married ladies, desirous of becoming notable housekeepers, owing to their ignorance of the language, gravely writing down any absurd nonsense the Khansamah

chose to invent, such as, "Little Missy had one goat yesterday for dinner, and the black fowl ate a bushel of corn," &c.

In the cold season, the Course at Dhoor-ghur was much more endurable than it had been in the hot weather, and we could ride every evening, and so be more independent; and many a good tear up and down have Nora and I often had. People in India are very good about lending their horses, and if you choose to ride on gentlemen's steeds you may have a new one every night; it is necessary, however, to make some kind of rule about accepting the loan of horses. Nora and I had generally enough to do in riding horses belonging to the lady part of the community, who, many of them, so soon lose their nerve out here, that they were glad to get us to give their steeds a good gallop before they mounted themselves, and we were always happy to try any experiments. On our own animals we looked

rather like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, I being generally mounted on the black Persian, while Nora preferred riding her little "Puck," which, despite its small size, was such "a good one to go," the chesnut being pronounced quite too wild for the Course. For any young ladies ambitious of trying a flirtation by moonlight, there are certainly rare opportunities in India; there being no twilight, the nights close in very rapidly, and the full glory of an Eastern moon needs no comment. After a good long canter, when standing to rest under a feathery tamarind-tree, listening to some choice bit from "Lucia" or "L'Elisir d'Amour," what wonder if thoughts of home and distant loved ones should soften the hearts of all, and they are led away into the dreamland of sentiment till their visions are broken by the dispersal of the band, and the words hastily spoken are repented of ere their echoes have died away in the air !

Moonlight and melody all the world over have been fraught with weal and woe to many a heart, and even blackie has his bit of romance, for on just such a glorious night as this, many years ago, a poor native, wandering through the lines of carriages attending the band, felt some sort of dart strike his heart at the sight of an English girl just come out. He sought his lonely hut that night with many a pang of uneasiness, but being doubtless acquainted with some Eastern version of "faint heart never won fair lady," he diligently commenced the study of English as a preliminary qualification; but whether learning made him mad, or the hopelessness of his pursuit struck him, the legend does not specify; at any rate, he became totally deranged, and now every band-night sees a weird figure, book in hand, wandering amongst the spectators, at times wistfully gazing for that face which is said to have turned his brain, at others repeat-

ing words from the book before him, which is invariably held topsy-turvy; and so his life wanes on, and all the Dhoorghur world know the poor madman, and many think it serves his impertinence right; and fair dames toss their heads scornfully at the daring individual, never pitying him who "told not his love," though I often felt tempted to allude to him, as not being much more presumptuous than some people we met with, who, having seen more of the world and its ways, ought to have known better.

The nonchalant way in which horses here are put into double or single harness, or used alternately as a gentleman's or lady's saddle-horse, without the slightest reference to their training or antecedents, would be bewildering to an English groom. Once, when one of our carriage-horses had fallen lame as we were going to a ball, the Persian was ordered to take his duty, he never having been in double harness before; how-

ever, he seemed to understand it perfectly. We went and returned in safety; but the next night, as we were going out again, when the Syces tried to harness him, he objected highly, and, being forced to the carriage, kicked out with a will, and smashed the coachman's seat to pieces, injuring the carriage so much it could not be used that night, so we were obliged to borrow one; and the black was led peaceably back to his stable, having acted just as if he had said, "I willingly submitted to drag your carriage once at a pinch, but when you were taking advantage of my good-nature, I was obliged to assert my dignity."

Our coachman was rather fond of trying experiments, and begged us to allow him to put the chesnut colt into the carriage; I strongly objected, however, seeing it had not been quite three weeks in training of any kind. However, on coming out ready equipped for church, we found the little

chesnut prepared to assist in drawing us, the coachman assuring us he had tried him yesterday in double harness, and found him perfectly quiet. It was too late to change then, so Nora and I stepped in, feeling some qualms about the prudence of the measure. With the exception, however, of standing now and then on his hind legs, and crossing the road to see some particularly new-looking object, the chesnut conducted himself to perfection, and won golden opinions from all around. I wonder how many of our friends at home would have considered their necks safe when sitting behind a creature in harness for the second time ?

People rarely eat pork in India, because the education of the animal when in life is generally rather questionable; but near the hills two or three Europeans have farms, and profess to furnish unexceptionable pork and bacon. Your Khitmutghars, being Mussulmans, have naturally an aversion to the

flesh of the pig in any form. Keith sometimes insisted on having fresh pork on his table, simply to show his right to have anything he chose, but always bestowed it on the dogs, never daring to eat it himself lest the servants should have been playing some tricks with it in cooking. The objection to fresh pork does not extend to hams, which are usually cured in England. Keith was always haunted by a tale of some indigo planter, who, intending to entertain some friends at dinner, ordered a ham for the occasion. Now a ham, being an expensive luxury, was rather a point in the repast, and the friends having waited some time, and finding it not forthcoming, went out to look after it, and found all the Khits sitting in a row on the ground, while the ham, ready dressed for table, was being passed from one to the other, and each in his turn spat upon it, to mark his contempt for the low caste Feringhees who were going to

partake of such polluting food. Indigo planters, from living much alone in out-of-the-way, isolated places, without any one to appeal to for protection and advice, usually take the law in their own hands, and determined to take signal vengeance on these insolent Khits. They were accordingly all seized and locked securely into an outhouse in company with the ham that had been dressed with such peculiar sauce, and not one was allowed to leave the building by their offended masters till sheer hunger had compelled them to devour every scrap of meat off that bone of contention, the defiling ham. It was truly a case of biter bit.

The Khits on the Bombay side seem a more willing and obliging race than in our parts, for a lady told me, that having invited a large dinner party one day, she totally forgot to inform her Khansamah of their coming till the afternoon of the appointed day, and the man, though at first rather

bewildered at being required to provide a suitable entertainment upon such short notice, reassured her by declaring if the Mem-Sahib could keep her guests talking for one hour beyond the regular time, all should be in perfect readiness;—a promise which he really fulfilled most completely.

Just before we left Dhoorghur the whole station was ringing with an event which caused considerable merriment. How it ever got whispered about was never known : everybody was bound over to strict secrecy, and yet every one seemed acquainted with all particulars. A young lady, closely veiled, was riding one morning *solus* on the race-course, which was deserted at that hour of the day, and she had chosen it as a good piece of cantering ground ; her horse, a mettlesome Arabian, was highly excited, and dashing along in gallant style, when she heard a wheezing sound behind her, and, turning round, beheld a stout gentleman on

an old country pony, evidently trying to overtake her. Thinking she might have dropped something, she checked her horse's speed, and allowed her breathless pursuer to come up with her. He commenced upbraiding her for the race she had given him, and when she, alarmed for his sanity, was about to take a speedy departure, he hastily dismounted, and seizing her horse's rein, adjured her by the most touching epithets to listen kindly to his suit, and there and then proffered his heart and hand for her acceptance. She, thoroughly bewildered, turned her face towards him and raised her veil, when, with a howl of despair, the little man sank back, and subsided on the grass. He had addressed the wrong lady! But as no offence had been intended, none could be given; so she cantered off, leaving her mistaken adorer wringing his hands, and vainly endeavouring to raise the head of his pony, who obstinately persisted in grazing on.

Everybody in India knows exactly the number of proposals each young lady has received, the day they were made, and even the exact words used on the occasion. How all this is brought about no one can tell, but it often recalled to our minds the many warnings we had received on first arriving in the country respecting elderly lady confidantes. A friend of ours, on hearing this veracious history, was so much struck by its piquancy, that he instantly outlined from imagination the supposed appearance of the parties at the moment of the *dénouement*—a highly dramatic situation truly—and I have chosen this as a specimen of the many tales of a similar character which constantly go the round of an Indian station, because it has been honoured by such a spirited illustration.

The society of Dhoorghur had kept itself in a continual state of excitement through the cold weather by a succession of races,



THE VEILED PROPHET.

our time was our own, and no such momentous concern as “packing” was weighing down our spirits.

We were much pleased to find that we were to have the society of our friend Mrs. Clement in our steamer, as she had suddenly made up her mind to take home her little twin boys, who were growing too old for India. We had often met these children on their little tats when we were taking our morning ride—pretty rosy boys, who did credit to Dhoorghur air. They were so wonderfully alike that even their own mother could not distinguish them apart, and often had to ask the child himself if he was Willie or the other one. We had succeeded in persuading Keith that it was a positive necessity that we should see both Delhi and Agra on our way down country. He had such an aversion to anything native, he would scarcely have walked two yards to see the most beautiful mosque; but we declared we

should feel for ever abased in our own eyes (if not in those of other people) did we allow ourselves to pass within fifty miles of both cities and not insist on stopping (however inconvenient) to inspect the ruins of one, and the Tâj of the other. So it was settled we were to stay a few days at both stations, and we devoted our energies entirely to prepare for our departure. The last week of our stay was a busy one. The day before we left we went to a race before breakfast, spent the morning in packing and receiving visitors, at four o'clock went to a hunt and finished three jackals, then on to the Mall and home to dinner, after which we thought it our duty to go and patronise a man who was to display some wizard tricks in the theatre, which were not good, but it was a treat to see the intense enjoyment of the English soldiers present, poor creatures, they have so little amusement; from the theatre we went on to a dance,

our last in India. Altogether, it was not such a bad day's work for languid Anglo-Indians. To the last moment people refused to believe we were really going, and expected to see us on the Mall next evening as usual.

The last few days we were dreadfully pestered by all the servants coming to beg for chits (written characters). It is extraordinary what a value they seem to set on their chits. Whenever you hire a servant you ask to see his bundle of chits, and are presented with a packet of very dirty little notes, so much worn as to be nearly illegible, and most of them setting forth that the rather questionable-looking individual before you possesses all the qualifications of a good servant; and many are of such ancient date that you wonder at what age the claimant for your service could possibly have entered on the duties of life. Of course it is impossible to know if these notes were ever given

to the men at all, for servants make quite a little trade of hiring them out to each other. No one ever professes to believe in these chits at all, yet it is almost the only hold you have over a new servant, and people invariably ask for and read them carefully over, while the servants regard them as of great value, and treasure them accordingly. Forged ones are frequently manufactured in the bazaar, for a friend of ours, on going over a Khit's characters previous to hiring him, was astonished to find one from himself, praising his supposed servant highly. I refused at first to give chits to any except our Ayahs and Dhobee; but finding the favour so highly valued by Keith's servants, I afterwards extended it to our two little Syces and Keniah, whom I could with truth recommend highly.

We had a repetition of the London packing time on a smaller scale, having left quantities of things behind us for the

benefit of the soldiers' wives and our Ayahs; and at last, all being completed, we started, leaving the squirrel and minah to the tender mercies of the servants. Keith was to accompany us to Delhi, and just as we had started, Zâwur, who had been confided to the Ayah's care, broke away from her, and flew back to the house, taking refuge on the cornice of one of the rooms. It took Keith and the Chuprassees an hour to catch him again, and confine him with Motec in their basket. This delay caused us to arrive at Delhi too late for the dinner at our friend's (Mr. Maxwell's) house.

Wishing to combine business and pleasure, Keith stopped to visit some Thanadar (police) stations on his way to Delhi, and it was amusing to see the *empressolement* with which all the native officials came tumbling out to salaam to the Burrah Sahib; but he, being in a great hurry, cut them all short by a few hasty words, and proceeded on to the

next. Keith had a great aversion to all salaaming, declaring that, after a native had salaamed to you for about a month, he considers himself entitled to an appointment, and believes himself exceedingly ill-used when he does not get it.

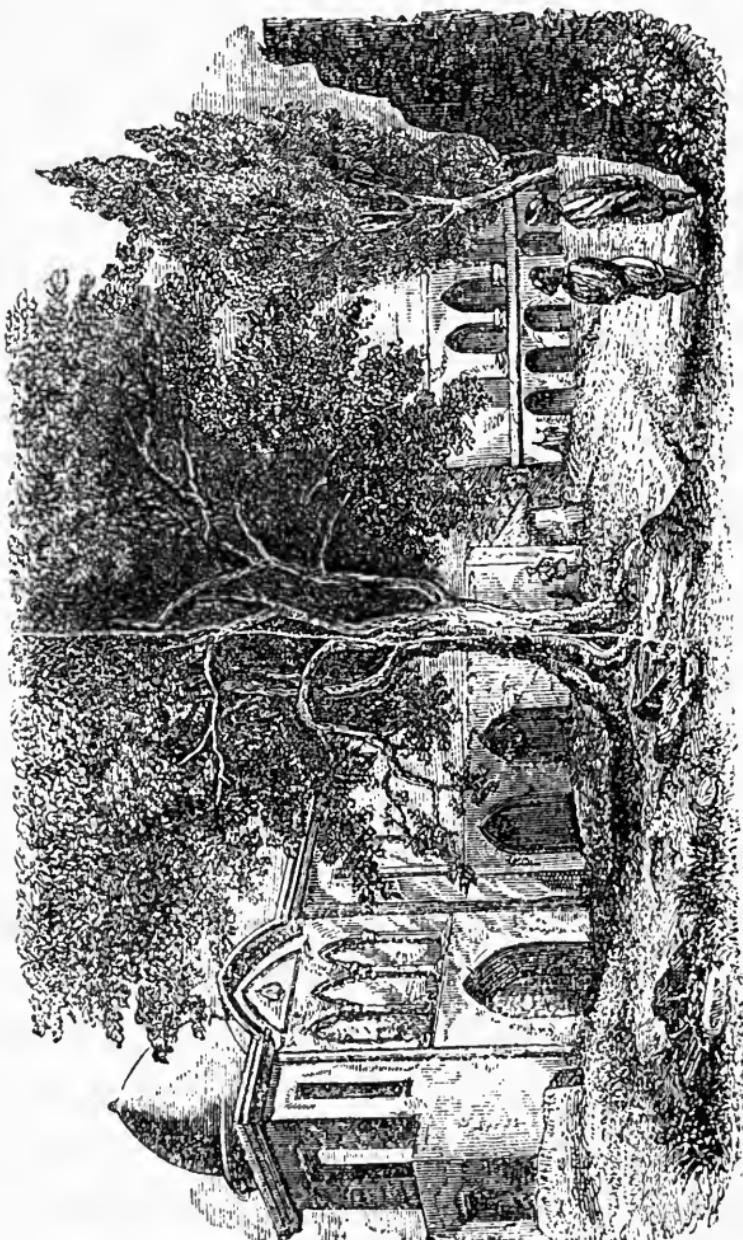
The only object of interest on the road to Delhi is the lovely group of tombs belonging to one Mahomet Rassoul and his family, with their Moorish pavilions around, just as you are leaving Dhoorghur. It is strange that only in their tombs do the Mahometan population of India ever remind you of the Arabian Nights. On reaching the little river "Hindun," the bridge being under repair, we had some hundred yards of sand, mud, and water to cross, and there being but one team of bullocks for everybody, the delay was tedious. While waiting for Keith's gharrie, we recognised some Landour friends on the bridge, and went up to speak to them, and were amused at the pertinacity with

which they refused to notice us at all till we were close to them, and then told us that, seeing the scarlet flannel jackets we had left out for travelling in, they concluded we must be some infantry officers who were pretending to recognise them by way of passing the time. This long delay, and Zâwur's defection, detained us till nine o'clock was striking as we reached Delhi, only in time to take a hand at a round game of cards, and settle our plans for the next day's sight-seeing. Of course the great object was the Kootûb, and next morning saw us journeying towards it. The first thing that strikes one must be the extraordinary number of ruins round Delhi; for miles every step you take is over fallen pillars and ruined tombs, every yard you advance reveals continued varieties of the same objects, giving one some idea of what this wonderful city must have been in the palmy days of Mogul magnificence. The King of Delhi

had sent fresh horses to meet us at Sufter Jung's tomb, and while they were being harnessed we looked over it. All Mahometan buildings are on precisely the same pattern—three low domes and minarets—the lower walls, however, sometimes ornamented with a wealth of invention inconceivable.

The Kootûb is supposed to be the highest single tower in the world, and, like its shorter brother of Pisa, leans slightly to one side. Long winding steps lead you to the top, where you have an extended view; but no other object is gained. Some say the tower was built by an old Mogul in order that his daughter might daily say her prayers in sight of the holy Ganges, whose silver thread, by a slight stretch of imagination, may be seen from the top. Perhaps she undertook that daily pilgrimage to perform her devotions in a cooler atmosphere, for we found, though the air was hot

and close at the foot, at the top so strong a wind was blowing that Keith would not allow us to stand outside without holding us tight, lest we should be carried bodily away. The ruins round are most extensive and extraordinary: lovely arches, and corridors of beautiful pillars, apparently ending in nothing, and walls carved with the most exquisite diapering, supporting no roofs. There is a strange bronze pillar of immense size, whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity; no one can read the characters of its inscription, or divine whence it came, or why it was placed here: it must have been the production of a people who had obtained a perfect mastery over metals. The only legend, even, I could hear respecting it is, that the native girls come and try if they can span the foot of the pillar with their arms; if they succeed, the omen predicts, as all such omens do, the speedy arrival of a wealthy husband; but if the unfortunate



NEAR DELHI.

maiden cannot clasp the pillar she is doomed to celibacy.

After descending from the Kootûb, we proceeded through a labyrinth of ruins to see the famous divers, and an ugly sight it was. The men presented themselves on a projecting stone at the top of a frightfully deep well, and each in succession leaped out with a wild cry, and shot down into the yawning abyss below. After what seemed an immense time, you heard a dull sound in the water far beneath, and then through some subterranean passage they emerged to upper day by a long flight of steps, and repeated the perilous feat till we went away. It was impossible to repress a shudder as each man sprang into the air and dropped; it seemed as if nothing could save them from being smashed. They practise from a very early age, and we saw several little juveniles taking leaps from small stages erected purposely for their benefit. Altogether, it was

a horrible exhibition, and I was glad when it was over, though Keith declared he thought it would not be difficult, and could hardly be persuaded not to try the experiment himself.

In returning home, Mr. Elton, the charioteer of the dog-cart I was sitting in, allowed his spirited little Arab to go its own pace; and as we were flying along at a tremendous rate, we came into violent collision with a bullock hackary, the driver of which, on seeing us coming, had wisely driven his bullocks right across the road, and waited the shock of our arrival in patient expectation. Mr. Elton could not believe he meant to remain in that position till it was too late to retreat; then there was a tremendous concussion, which rolled the bullocks in the road, and smashed their harness and trappings. I expected to find myself in the ditch, but somehow the dog-cart recovered its equilibrium, and passed on like

a flash of lightning, leaving the hackary driver too much astonished, apparently, to think of picking up his bullocks, or otherwise assisting himself ; and when we pulled up to see what damage was done, we found our express speed had saved us, and the fiery little steed was unhurt, when I thought he must have spiked himself on the bullocks' horns. These hackary drivers are the most perversely stupid creatures it is possible to conceive ; they never seem able to learn anything about their own side of the road, and when you appear in the distance, ten to one they will come on to the side you are trying to pass by, simply from obstinacy, as it seems. Your only safe plan is to pull up entirely, and pass them at a walk, when you can be prepared for all contingencies.

Next morning our host, Mr. Maxwell, had half the jewellers in Delhi up to display their wares to us. We had sent some orders beforehand, which had been wonder-

fully executed. These men will copy anything from a drawing with marvellous exactitude. The room presented a most motley scene, the numerous men themselves as extraordinary as the goods they exhibited so perseveringly to us, which consisted principally of trinkets and jewellery, from the cheapest and most rubbishy imitation to diamonds valued at thousands of rupees. Almost everything manufactured in the north-west is made at Delhi: their gold and silver embroidery has long been famous; the floss silk work that bears the name of the town is well known at home; they carve figures and animals in ivory very well indeed; their armour is justly celebrated; and besides the jewellers, whose name is "legion," there are whole colonies of artists; and I never appreciated Delhi paintings till I had been there, those you see at home are so very stiff and inferior. Some of these men portray their mosques in a style of art

that at home would be quite unattainable even for a much higher remuneration, and they copy photographs with surprising fidelity. Members from each of these different fraternities were present in Mr. Maxwell's room, each becoming every instant more and more excited and more emulous of the other, striving to produce the greatest rarities and the most extraordinary bargains; then the watchful servants of the house behind all, keeping a strict account of every article purchased, and the amount of their "dustoor" ready reckoned up. Our Ayah's hopes of a profitable day were nipped in the bud, utterly ignored by the crowd of claimants before her. When we had chosen everything we could possibly want, and were quite tired out with bargaining, the merchants were dismissed; and after refreshing ourselves with tiffin, we proceeded to mount the elephants, which were ready to take us round the bazaars. Never

having been on an elephant since we were juveniles and had a sixpenny ride in the Zoological Gardens, we looked forward to the expedition with great delight, notwithstanding every one told us an hour on an elephant would make every bone in our body ache. I am told there is just as much difference in the paces of elephants as in those of horses ; and certainly the one we were on went along very smoothly. Mr. Elton assured us it was, without exception, the best elephant in India, having been expressly trained to carry out some of the numerous queens of Oude. We were enchanted with the bazaars. They gave us the most perfect specimens of Oriental life we had yet seen ; snake-charmers and all kind of wild-looking natives about. Whenever we saw anything that looked tempting, the elephants were stopped, and the desired object handed up to us for inspection ; and we purchased sundry marvellous embroi-

dered native caps and strangely fashioned silver ornaments, while a curious crowd of natives pressed around to watch the progress of the bargain.

The Delhi natives are very rude, and we were told it was wrong for ladies to go about unguarded. Even while we were purchasing things, the stall-keepers would sometimes make some impertinent observation to the gentlemen with us; and we were directed to return the article instantly, and proceed to another stall. After seeing the Jumna, or Lâl Musjid, so called from being built of red stone, the most sacred Mahometan temple, the Chandee Chowke (silver street), and all the other lions of this magnificent city, we wended our way homewards, sufficiently tired with the day's proceedings. We then took a more minute survey of Mr. Maxwell's house—an immense place built in the old days of Residencies, and furnished more like an English one than any we had yet

seen, with the additional luxury of a good library—an incalculable advantage. It was even more like a Castle of Otranto than our first Dhoorghur abode. I never learnt my way about it, but knew if you walked steadily on you must reach the drawing-room at last, as all the rooms opened into each other; and so, having lingered as long as we dared, we once more packed our gharries, and set off *en route* for Agra.

In addition to the usual requisites for comfort in a gharrie during the cold weather, you require a couple of rezies, things which are most extensively used throughout India for all kinds of purposes. They are thickly-wadded quilted coverlids, the outside covered with some bright-coloured chintz, and lined with pink muslin or rose-coloured silk; and most comfortable things they are, whether used as pillows, mattresses, or counterpanes. At Khoorja, Keith was obliged to leave us, being unable to get

leave to go any farther. Our parting would have been sad enough but for the hope, if we were all spared, of meeting again within a year in England; and so, with many injunctions to behave better in the epistolatory line than gentlemen generally think necessary, our gharries parted company almost on the same spot that had seen our meeting last year, he returning to Dhoor-ghur, we proceeding to Agra, which place we succeeded in reaching in the middle of the night, and found it impossible to make the coachman comprehend where we wanted to go. He applied at the Cotwali station and other places for information, but without success, and I fully expected we were to be carried about Agra all night; but by dint of repeating the name and appointment of our friends very distinctly several times, a ray of intelligence dawned on the mind of a bystander, and we were ultimately landed in safety at the Wyndhams' house. Of

course “the point” for visitors in Agra is the Tâj Muhâl, and thither next morning our friends took us. I scarcely knew what to expect after the numberless views and descriptions of it every one has seen and heard so often, and believe my first impression was disappointment. It was smaller than I anticipated, and looked as if made of porcelain ; but, like all grand objects, the longer you gaze the more you become absorbed in it. The gates of approach are most unique and Oriental in character, and the gardens beautifully kept up by Government—a privilege fully appreciated by the native population. We were amused to see here, as at Mussoorie, the little daisy plots carefully watched and tended—rare and valuable exotics.

Who may attempt to describe the Tâj? It is utterly hopeless, and no picture, unfortunately, can approach it either—Italian refinement grafted on Oriental imagination.

It is certain that many Italians, probably prisoners, were carried up here by the great Shah Jehan, and either compelled, or bribed, to aid in decorating this colossal gift to posterity. The exquisite inlaid work—of flowers in their natural colours—which decorates the whole building inside and out, is precisely like the Florentine work of to-day; and the marble ornaments now manufactured in Agra are very similar in character to those of Italy. After all, it is the grandest monument in the world of a love which death could not subdue. Offerings of fresh flowers are daily laid on the tomb of Mumtâz, and I gathered some fading rose-leaves from her last resting-place with more reverence, and treasured them with far more care, than I did a flower from the tomb of Abelard and Héloïse at Père la Chaise. We visited the Tâj again at night, and saw it under all aspects, brilliantly illuminated with pink and blue lights, when it looked very

like the closing scene of an extravaganza at home, and you felt disappointed that the little fairies in silver tissue did not appear; then the tall minarets at the sides were lighted up with different coloured fires, and flung weird effects of light over the building, till at last the natives had exhausted all their devices, and the moon was allowed unchecked to pour her glorious radiance over everything, and made the Tâj appear softer and larger, till it looked like a vast pearl, whose glowing hues every instant grew more lovely and transparent, its exquisite outline every moment more unearthly and ethereal; the broad river sleeping quietly by, with its banks dotted by numerous Musjids (temples), and fairylike pavilions close at hand, where happy people who have time to spare may live for weeks under the shadow of the Tâj, and imbue their souls with the spirit of its beauty. Such was not our favoured lot; we were to

return home to dream intoxicating dreams, and wake next morning to have our devotion to yesterday's idol shaken by a visit to the Motee Musjid (Temple of Pearl), a numberless collection of arches, formed entirely of white marble, the effect of which it is impossible to describe; and the only picture I saw doing it a shadow of justice is one I have by a Delhi artist, in which the intricacy of detail has been followed with a faithful earnestness and a laborious patience that would task an Englishman sorely to imitate.

Next came the old palace at Agra, with its wonderful arches and magnificent carving, in which we wandered from one beauty to another till we almost lost the power of admiring; and it was a relief to our feelings to be able to abuse heartily some gothic English commanding officer, who, by way of making the rooms more comfortable for his family, more like the bungalows they were accustomed to inhabit, covered the delicately in-

laid marble walls with an inch of good honest plaster, bits of which are now broken off to show you the original pattern of the walls. There was an enormous slab of black marble of immense thickness, that had been a royal table, but was now badly cracked right across, which fracture the guide assured us occurred when Lord Ellenborough and other government officials were seated on it deliberating over some questions of importance. Whether the man meant the marble had broken under the bodily weight of the great men, or the ponderous nature of their counsils, or that it actually broke its heart from the indignity it was subjected to, it was impossible to determine.

The immense tombs at Secundra would take weeks to examine, and years to comprehend; they must have been designed by men of colossal minds, and completed by others of indomitable perseverance. Alas! there are no such giants in these days.

Life in India is made up of forming acquaintance with people, and taking leave of them just as you begin to like each other. Now, having seen as much as we could of Agra, we had to part from our hospitable hosts, and re-enter our wearisome gharrie, and found we had spent so many days in sight-seeing, that we had barely left ourselves time to reach Calcutta before our steamer sailed, and were, of course, very anxious to get on as rapidly as possible. Being now much better acquainted with the language and characteristics of the natives, our plan was to look over the list of chokees and stations, with all the distances marked (furnished you by the dâk agent), and pitching on one about seventy miles off, hold up a rupee before the coachman's eyes, and say, for instance, "Mynpoorie, bhote juldee" (very quickly). The man always grinned, and understood perfectly well what was meant, so it was not his fault if we did

not go at a full gallop the whole way; and if we were detained too long at a chokee, a warning “Nai bucksheesh” sent us on again with redoubled speed homewards. It is impossible to understand the full meaning and feeling of rest contained in that one short word “home!” until by weary wanderings and hours of loneliness you learn to turn to it with a yearning that fills your being; how inspiriting was it to think that each mile passed shortened our distance from those dear ones who, in imagination, were tracking our steps!

Our former dâk experience enabled us now to manage capitally, the only variation being, that on arriving at each bungalow our first care was to have the precious basket containing our beloved cats brought down from the roof of our gharrie, and the poor occupants released from their close captivity and chained in the verandah of our breakfast-room, where their hunger was

a difficult thing to appease, Motee's especially; Zâwur always was the most dainty of the two, preferring quality to quantity. We were rather dismayed at first to find he could not be induced to touch chicken, the only procurable food; it was not till compelled by severe hunger that the poor creature could bring himself to swallow such low-caste food at all. Then Rose had some fresh bread-and-water, and sat complacently on the top of her cage, eating a lump of sugar. Whenever we stopped at a chokee we were almost sure to hear Motee howling at the top of his voice; and Rose learnt to imitate the cry to perfection. The animals never seemed to suffer from the changes of temperature, though it was oppressively warm in the middle of the day and bitterly cold at night.

It is amusing how travellers meeting at bungalows, though unacquainted even with each other's names, are willing to exchange

any civilities in their power, and chat with the freedom of old acquaintances. One morning a gentleman descended from his gharrie just as we drove up for our mid-day meal. We gave our orders for hot water, eggs, &c., and retired to our side of the house, and in a few minutes two cups of tea and a canister of biscuits were brought in by the Khit, with the Sahib's compliments. He, knowing how tardily natives execute ladies' commands, had taken this trouble to ensure our speedy refreshment. Seeing he was about to depart, we stepped into the verandah to thank him for his attention, and found an officer in a flaming dressing-gown, enough to make one hot to look at; he had been travelling in Cashmere, and was now *en route* to join his regiment; of course he envied us highly, having our faces set home-wards. We were able to furnish him with some "small change," and so we went on our various ways. One of the first ques-

tions of travellers to each other at these bungalows generally is, "Can you spare me any small change?" One requires an immense number of little coins for the numberless bucksheeshes required. This amicable intercourse, however, is strictly confined to English people; those with the slightest taint of half-caste are ignored completely, and in India the eye gets educated to detect the least trace with a celerity that is astonishing. Our down-country journey being performed during the cold season, we were enabled to travel day and night, only stopping in the middle of the day for breakfast, and in the evening for dinner. At whatever hour of the day or night you arrive at a bungalow, the Khits seem perfectly ready and willing to serve you, never thinking of grumbling about being unreasonably disturbed, as I suspect people at home in the same position would do. The country did not look quite so sandy and barren as it did on our way

up, for the opium crops were in full flower, and we passed field after field one mass of snowy blossoms. I never saw any coloured poppies among them ; they were all a double white kind.

On reaching Benares, we were driven to the judge's house, he being a great friend of Keith's, and were received very kindly by his wife and daughter, but were only able to spend the day with them, being compelled to hurry to Calcutta. In the afternoon we drove through the bazaars, and went to see the college. The masters' houses near are built in the Elizabethan style, high-peaked roofs and gable ends forming a strange contrast to the flat, low-roofed, and thatched bungalows around, and the clematis and roses were climbing all over them like the cottages of home. At night we started again on our journey, laden with flowers and oranges from their garden.

One morning we came to a place where

the road was being repaired, and the Coolies had sluiced it with water, which made it so heavy the horse positively refused to drag us over. The coachman and Syce tried their usual expedient of turning round the wheels, but the creature resolutely backed, and finding we should soon be turned off the road, we jumped out, getting our feet thoroughly soaked in an instant. Nora went to the animal's head, and commenced a vigorous dragging, which so astonished the coachman, he left off turning the wheels, while I administered a gentle reminder with the whip, and after adding some words of encouragement, succeeded in walking him over the bad bit. I don't know whether horse or coachman were most bewildered; both showed evidently they had never been so treated before, though I did hear of a young lady going up country whose coachman would not proceed at the rate she wished, so at last she mounted the box, and,

taking the reins, gave the astonished coachee at once a lesson in scientific driving and English wilfulness.

We had wonderfully few accidents going down country, and found the carriages of the North-West Dâk Company decidedly larger than those we came up in—a great consideration when it is to be your sole residence for a week. As we neared Raneegunge, we urged our coachman on with increased promises of bucksheesh, if he managed to arrive in time for the night train to Calcutta. But, alas ! on reaching the terminus, a black railway official informed us the train had departed an hour ago. There was nothing for it but to content ourselves with a night at the hotel, where our up-country party had taken tea together when our wanderings in India commenced —rather a miserable place ; an opinion in which our poor cats fully agreed, as they had to pass the night in a damp bath-room,

and testified their disgust by continued howlings, declaring they infinitely preferred their basket on the top of our gharrie. We bestowed all our blankets, pillows, rezies, and remaining stores on the hotel-keeper, including a box of sardines, which we had regularly presented to each Khit at the various bungalows we passed, requesting them to open it, but in vain ; they did not seem to comprehend what they were expected to do at all. And so we departed, most thankful to have seen the last of Raneegunge, and reached Calcutta just two days before the steamer sailed.

Our two days in Calcutta were spent in a whirl of visiting and shopping. We saw some of the unfortunates who had come out in the same steamer with us, and excited all their envy at our speedy return home. Home was the word now constantly on our lips ; it seemed so impossible to realise in six short weeks we should be there, and India but

as a vision of the past, to be discarded as a nightmare, always excepting the glorious Himalayas.

It was wonderful how the Chicken-wallahs (embroidery sellers) found us out; and we were perfectly besieged with them, displaying their goods, and all assuring us, of course, that theirs were of the best quality. The work is generally excellent, but as the fine pieces are all done on muslin, which wears out immediately, many ladies take out stores of cambric ready stamped, and the men work it quickly and well; it is very reasonable indeed, if you can get some lady who understands the ways of the people to purchase it for you, as the men always ask double what they mean to take.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 23rd of February, 1857, we went on board the old *Hindostan*, having spent exactly eleven months in the country from the day we landed at that same Garden Reach. Every

one on board congratulated every one else that they were fairly on the road home; every one was in the best of tempers and highest of spirits, and many of the gentlemen made strikingly polite speeches to the muddy waters of the yellow Hooghly as the gallant steamer clefth her way through the turbid stream. Passing down, we naturally heard a great number of anecdotes connected with the river, and, among others, Major Seward told us a year or two ago he had been upset in a boat here, and some of the party were drowned. (If you fall into this river your life is rarely saved, on account of the strong under-current which sweeps you away.) He, being a good swimmer, struck out towards a dinghee (native boat) he saw approaching, concluding, of course, they would take him in; but, to his great surprise, instead of aiding him, the man at the prow raised his paddle and tried to strike him across the head. Major Seward dodged the

blow, and again attempted to enter the boat, but the paddle was a second time raised to beat him down; so, seeing they were bent on murdering him, he dived deep, and coming up a long way from the boat, ultimately succeeded in reaching the shore. The men in the dinghee looked surprised to see him appear again, but were too busy disposing of his companions to attend to him. People say numbers of sailors disappear from Calcutta every year, murdered by these boatmen when crossing the river. These frightful accounts gave us rather a different impression of the "mild Hindoo" from that we were taught to entertain at home. I don't think that any on board seriously regretted their departure; of course, in the case of a wife going home for her health, it was different, as the better half was left behind; but the mere fact of quitting India was hailed with delight by all. We, having passed that way, comparatively speaking, so

lately, were looked upon as excellent guide-books and referees on general topics of interest, and discussed quite learnedly the time we ought to reach the various touching ports, or the sights best worth seeing at them.



LITTLE HETTIE.

At Madras we picked up a number of passengers, and amongst them a pretty child,

whose dark-grey eyes and jet-black fringes spoke her Hibernian origin. Being then the only little girl on board, she was at once installed as prime pet with everybody, particularly as she entirely repudiated the society of the boys, whom she considered very rude, and the whole ship's company were instantly enlisted in the service of running races with, and otherwise amusing her, or coaxing her back to good-humour when a fall on the deck had temporarily disturbed her placidity. Mr. Campbell made violent efforts to gain the chief place in her affections, but the stoical indifference with which she heard his protestations argued little for his success so long as she had a plantain to demolish, listening with an equally unmoved countenance to "Hettie, I adore," or "Hettie, I abhor you." She regarded him somewhat as an eccentric character, and stigmatised him alternately as "that naughty," or "that funny man."

Endless were the discussions now engaged in by the Madrasees and Qui Hyes, as the Bengalese are nicknamed, respecting the merits of their several presidencies. Calcutta people consider themselves always as belonging to the aristocratic presidency, and the reasons they give for looking down on the others with scorn were sufficiently characteristic. "Madras is a benighted presidency, because"—and the words are uttered in an under tone expressive of the deep horror felt by the speaker—"people there eat bazaar mutton" (eating bazaar mutton is looked upon in Bengal as the lowest depth at which a civilised being can arrive); "and even," as an officer feelingly observed to me, "when the Madras regiments come up to Bengal, and we teach them to eat gram-fed* mutton, and they acknowledge its superiority, the moment they go back to their own

* Gram is a kind of dried pulse, on which most domestic animals in India are fed.

benighted land they return to their old practices. What can you expect from such a people?" Bengalese repudiate bazaar mutton for the same reason they refuse to touch native feeding cows. They form themselves into "mutton clubs," two or three families agreeing to divide a sheep twice a week amongst them.

The very first night we appeared on the Dhoorghur Course, a lady desired me to inform my brother there was a vacancy in her mutton club, and when, scarcely understanding the importance of the opportunity, I did so, I was astonished to find how Keith seized on the chance with avidity, and wrote directly to secure the desirable position. Then "the Bombayites have been known to travel with a kit (camp equipage) that a common soldier ought to be ashamed of, and are so utterly careless of where they live themselves that they have actually been known at a new station to put their horses

into the quarters assigned to the officers, and sleep in the stables themselves."

At Calcutta, amongst the numerous purchases we made, were two young and inexperienced green parrots, in a native cage, which turned out a most insecure place of abode; for on descending to our cabin, the very first day of our life on board, we found one parrot had already committed suicide by precipitating himself from the stern window, which was wide open, and the other was just about to take the final plunge, but evidently thought the water looked dirty. Our entrance of course hastened its end. As they were new acquisitions we did not mourn inconsolably over their untimely fate, and the purser, hearing of our loss, promised to procure us any amount of them at Madras; a pledge he nobly fulfilled, bringing on board a large cage with three little innocents sitting close together to keep off the cold, they being entirely devoid of feathers, with the excep-

tion of a few on the head and wings. And now the cares of a young family were severely felt. We had a delightful cabin, with more room than usually falls to the lot of passengers; and, indeed, we needed it all for our precious parrots and their bowls of food. At four every morning these little fledglings aroused us by their frantic cries of hunger, and we had to rise and stuff bread-and-water down each gaping throat as they sat in a row, bobbing their heads at us in a tremble of excitement; we were then allowed a rest till eight, when they again became clamorous, till crammed too full for the exertion of cawing. Rose looked on with interest at our attentions to the juvenile brood; but whenever we put her near them they set up such renewed vociferations that she became quite alarmed. It was a sight to see the way they swallowed plantain, making feeble pokes at it with their beaks, and rolling over it, being too weak to feed themselves.

People told us we never should get them home alive, as they were too young; but somehow they survived the perils of the way, and are at the present moment in a flourishing condition. Rose has already taught one of them a few sentences, and they all roam about the house as sleek and impertinent as possible, insisting on being noticed.

There was one rash gentleman on board bent solely and entirely on perpetrating matrimony, for which object alone he was undertaking the homeward journey; he used every morning, when performing his toilette, to disclose his future plan of action to the sharers of his cabin, through whom we were favoured with a peep at this original's arrangements. When he quitted England, it seems he had a large circle of acquaintance, amongst whom were "seven regular jolly bricks of girls with no nonsense about them," on all of whom he had "kept

his eye," and was now about to make a formal offer to each in turn of the lot, until he found one of the happy group willing to become the fortunate possessor of his hand and heart. It was perfectly immaterial to him which of them took him, as he had arrived at the conclusion that a wife was necessary, and therefore must be obtained. I wonder how his scheme will succeed.

The Sunday muster on the Indian side of Suez is a much larger and more motley one than that in the Mediterranean. The crew is chiefly composed of Lascars and broad-shouldered, thick-lipped negroes from the African coast, with gay turbans and large earrings. They are a much stronger race than the slight, graceful Lascars, who, in their white tunics and red kummerbands, look very picturesque, if not very serviceable. They make very good sailors for this climate, however, being as active as cats, and making up in numbers what they want

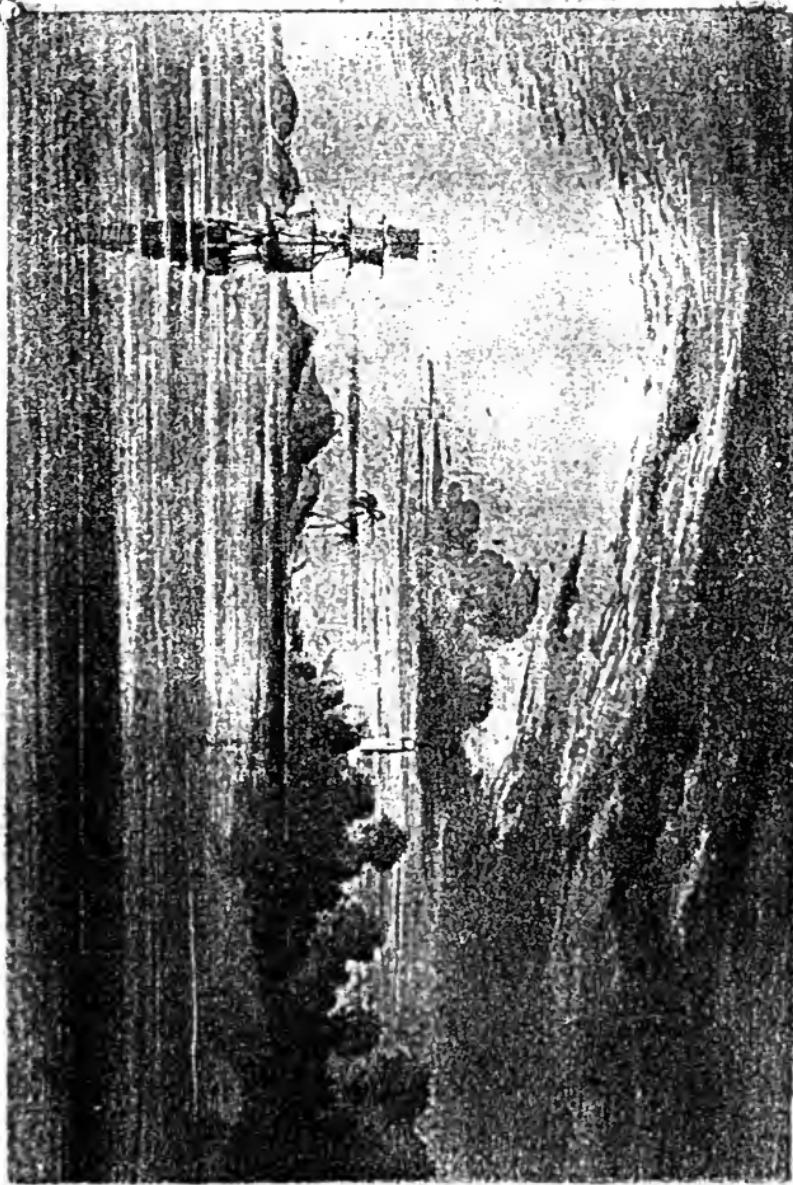
in strength. On the English side it took a man and a boy to heave the line for ascertaining our speed; on this, five or six men were necessary. The engineers were all Englishmen, and the few English sailors on board seemed to do nothing but steer, and then amuse themselves.

Amusement and occupation were objects so eagerly sought after on board, that anything that promised to while away an hour was greeted with delight. Thus the old English attempt to eat cold pudding from a fork passed under your left shoulder, was continually practised at dinner, though it was not the orthodox time of year for such a trial of fortune. Cracking nuts with the forefinger employed many otherwise idle moments. Those acquainted with the trick know it requires more skill than strength, but several gentlemen brought their fists down with the force of a sledge-hammer on their devoted forefingers, and pretended not

to have hurt themselves at all, though the pain must have been excruciating.

We fortunately had a fine run to Ceylon, and every one landed prepared to admire it with enthusiasm. We proceeded immediately to call on our friends the De Vaux, who were greatly astonished to see us, true to our promise, returning home. We had seen some lovely bracelets manufactured here from the light pieces of tortoiseshell being picked out and formed into massive links; the bracelet is fastened by a heart set in gold, and from delicate filagree chains hang a bunch of charms set in the same material; it strongly resembles amber, and is very unlike anything procurable at home. Others are made entirely of dark pieces of the shells, the mountings of silver; and they are altogether as pretty presents for the home people as can be desired. Mrs. De Vaux kindly sent for the man she always dealt with, and we were able to obtain a

POINT DE VUE



supply of them really good; for many are made of spurious materials, and passed off as genuine. Cingalese in roguery nearly equal the Jews; they will assure you most solemnly, by all they hold sacred, that the stones they offer you for sale are real. A gentleman on board had resided there some time, and was well known. He stopped one of these traders, requesting to examine his jewels; but the man put his hands behind him, shaking his head, and saying, "No, no, sir; these stones only for steam-boat gentleman." We have since been informed that the greater part of the coloured glass sold there, and at other places where precious stones are offered at low prices, is all manufactured at the Island of Murano, in the Adriatic. A lady friend of ours went over the whole establishment there, and was told by the proprietors that they sent large consignments to all the principal English and French houses, where they are set, and then shipped for the colonies.

We spent a delightful day at the clergyman's house some way in the country, from which we had a magnificent view of the distant inland peaks. After dinner, when discussing various reptiles, we mentioned never having seen a scorpion, and our host instantly despatched a servant to the stable for some; this gentleman had a peculiar fancy of never allowing such creatures to be killed on his premises; even snakes were allowed free passage. He declared, for every one you killed, two came in its place, so the wisest course was to leave them alone. The servant soon returned with a cocoa-nut filled, apparently, with small black lobsters, which, on being turned out on the table, marched about, their tails erected in the air, and looked quite at home. I cannot say I at all admired such close quarters with such disagreeable things, but the Cingalese seemed to knock them about without fear of their stinging him. Here we saw hundreds of

pineapples growing wild, but were told they rarely came to perfection, as the porcupines ate them.

At Ceylon we embarked a number of people of a very different species to our former companions. Many of the new set were totally unacquainted with the English language, only the head of each party being able to say a few words. They were principally from Java, and the islands about there—such gaunt, hideous females, and unwieldy-looking Dutchmen! The amount of food they consumed must have been alarming to the purser; they never stopped eating from morning till night. Even when sea-sick (and they occasionally suffered dreadfully), they in a few minutes returned, with sharpened appetites, to beer, bread-and-cheese, or some such slight refreshment.

Their children were a most unruly lot, totally setting order at defiance, and waging

a fierce war with all the English children on board, who organised themselves into a regular army, and held daily encounters with the intruding foreigners, to the great alarm of their respective mothers. Their attire was simple and unique, consisting of trousers and a long coloured blouse reaching past the knees. It was admirably adapted for a warm climate, and seemed never to require changing, for the eldest boy of the party came on board in a dark-blue suit, which was never laid aside till we reached Marseilles. Sometimes the girls were dressed in white garments of the same pattern as the boys, which elicited strong disapproval from the junior English, for one day Master Freddy came up from the children's dinner with consternation on his face, and gravely informed Mrs. Clement, "Oh ! such a dreadful thing happened to-day: the Dutch girl came to dinner in her nightgown!" Charlie used to lay deep plans

for the punishment of the obnoxious Dutch boy in blue raiment, the ringleader of the foreign party. This boy had two very projecting teeth, which Charlie seemed to consider a special insult to the community at large, and one evening he showed us a piece of cord carefully made into a large slip-knot, and told us that "it was a noose, and when the Dutch boy ran past he should throw it out and catch him, and then he would fall down and break his teeth." This Master Charlie was a particularly far-seeing and thoughtful child; he used sometimes to come to me for stories, and I on one occasion related the doleful history of "Little Red Riding Hood," to which he listened with deep attention, but when it was finished began speculating on it. "Surely it was very wrong of Little Red Riding Hood to have told the wolf the right direction to her grandmother's house; she ought to have given him a wrong direction, then

he could not have found her out." "Oh, you sharp boy," said I, "there's no doubt about your being a born lawyer."

Among our new passengers were a number of English children and their parents, coming home from various outlandish places that one never hears of except at school. Most of the children were attended by queer-looking Malay or Chinese nurses and servants. One family of five hopeful little cherubs, the olive branches of Dr. and Mrs. Andrews, were under the dominion of a Malay boy and an Irish nurse, a gaunt, soldierly female, to whom Major Seward instantly conceived a violent and most unfounded prejudice. He being reduced by long-continued fever to the last stage of weakness, had a dreadful antipathy to anything either strong-minded or strong-bodied in other people; besides, on particularly rough days, she would stand at the door of the cabin with an everlasting baby in her

arms, and, looking round the saloon, would audibly wonder what people meant by being sea-sick, and what it felt like—a reflection which Major Seward always considered as highly personal.

Exactly on the opposite scale of womanhood, as far as size was concerned, appeared the little Malay nurse of a German baby, a perfect dwarf, standing about four feet nothing, and always presenting the same height whether sitting or standing. By way of announcing herself a Christian, she generally appeared in a red print dress and a charity-school child's cap ; the baby she carried looked miraculously tall by contrast. The mistress of this little comicality had attracted great attention on her first appearance among us from her fair pretty face ; her husband, a bearded German, was a merchant returning from Japan.

Much conjecture was raised on board respecting an elderly widow lady, an English-

woman, who travelled with a suspicious-looking attendant. This man, though attired in a secular garb, was discovered to be a Franciscan monk. Whether these two laid plans for the conversion of the ship's company was unknown, but though the monk was a second-class passenger he always took his breakfast on deck with his mistress, and any one ascending the stairs during that meal was sure to surprise the two in close and eager consultation, which was abruptly ended on any third person approaching. In the forepart of the ship the monk was looked upon as an inoffensive individual, and spent his time chiefly in concocting oils and pomades for the hair, which he sold to his fellow-passengers.

The tedium of the voyage was frequently diversified by lotteries respecting the probable hour at which we should reach any given place, and rupees were freely paid down to swell the grand sum total. As we

neared the land, offers were frantically made for tickets bearing a promising-looking hour, and the holders sometimes made quite a little fortune ; others held out in hopes of higher bids till the hour marked on their ticket had passed away, and so lost their chance. Each ticket has a quarter of an hour marked on it, and when the anchor drops, the possessor of the ticket containing the fortunate moment becomes the owner of the whole sum subscribed. Sometimes rather a large sum is collected. One lady, who was urged to take a ticket, refused, as lotteries were somewhat against her principles, till it was suggested that she might apply the money to some good purpose if it became hers. She did gain it, and forthwith the Church Missionary Society was enriched by fifty pounds. People coming home seem much more addicted to this kind of amusement than those going out.

Among our new acquisitions from Ceylon

were some of the sufferers from the burning of Canton. One was a singularly simple and ingenuous youth; he must have gone to China when very young, as he had spent five years there, and still looked extremely youthful. He had a most inveterate habit of making a chimney of himself, never being seen without a cigar in his mouth; he told us he had smoked five hundred che-roots on the voyage between Singapore and Ceylon. One evening there had been a grand discussion for and against matrimony on deck, and Mr. Stafford was warned by ladies as well as gentlemen that such unlimited indulgence in the pernicious weed must be much curtailed should he think of becoming a Benedict. At first he tried to combat such an arbitrary decree, but finding public opinion too strong for him, he rushed away to the forecastle with his beloved cigar, still his undisputed possession. The number he lighted and tossed away scarcely

half consumed, told the turmoil going on in his brain, which could hardly be soothed by a long course of extra mild Havannahs and other abominations.

The saloon is one continued scene of eating. At six o'clock early tea and biscuits made their appearance in the cabins; at seven o'clock breakfast is ready for the children and servants; at half-past eight a warning bell rings; and at nine the general breakfast is on the table. At twelve a refection of bread-and-butter, cheese and biscuits, beer and claret, is laid out for tiffin; and at two o'clock the children's and nurses' dinner appears. At half-past three the dressing-bell again sounds; and at four everybody rushes down ravenous for dinner. Scarcely has it disappeared, when the children's tea is ready; at seven the big children, ditto. Then whist parties begin to form, and other

people attend the musical gatherings on deck or lounge about until nine, when a slight refreshment of biscuits, wine, and brandy-and-water is prepared. By ten all the ladies have disappeared in preparation for the visit of the light-extinguishing quartermaster at half-past. Gentlemen pace the deck to a much later hour, and the whist parties do not break up till two. How they manage for light I do not know, nor can I conceive how the stewards go to bed at all, for the saloon was never quiet till two, and at four holystoning the decks commenced, and all the ship was alive again.

We whiled away the evening hours by music and singing; the piano was hoisted on deck, and our kind friend Mrs. Clement seemed acquainted with every air suggested, and ready to accompany every one. We had vocal music of all kinds, from that dread-

ful “Bobbing around,” given in thorough American style by a genuine Yankee, to the best operatic airs, dramatically delivered by a gentleman very much in Lablache’s style of figure: “The Friar,” as he was popularly called, from his favourite song being, “I am a friar of orders grey.” This gentleman’s repertoire was unlimited; tragic, comic, classical, anything and everything, he gave with ready good-humour. He was the established wit of the party, and, in consequence, gave utterance to the most terrific puns, at which it was impossible to help laughing from their utter absurdity, though, as a rule, we looked solemn at all puns, thinking them outrages on the feelings of society, and an inveterate punster an unmitigated bore. As it was extremely hot, the ladies were allowed to sit on the forecastle, and the *Hindostan* being flush

decked, it was easy of access, the gentlemen generously consenting to keep to windward when smoking.

After dinner we sometimes had most amusing scenes, for on board people are thankful for any amusement, and resort to the most childish games ; *pour passer le temps*, feats of agility and skill were daily performed before a circle of astonished spectators. Mr. Campbell, being immensely powerful, and his arms two inches longer than any one else's, distinguished himself highly. One evening an entirely novel amusement was introduced. Two chairs were placed on deck at a distance of about four feet from each other, a pole was then rested on them, and a gentleman, with a stick to balance himself by, sat down cross-legged on the pole ; a cap or hat was then placed on each chair corner, back and front,

and the gentleman, seated *à la Turque*, had to knock each off with his stick. It required extraordinary balance, and almost always ended in the downfal of gentleman, pole, chairs, and all, in a universal roll on the deck. The Friar was always suggesting feats requiring great agility, at which he looked on admiring and wondering. One evening he tied a quoit's ring to a rope and threw it over one of the rigging ropes, keeping the end in his hand, so that he could elevate or depress the ring at pleasure. He then requested all the gentlemen on board to come and kick at it, and see how high they could do so, urging them to kick out like men, and not be afraid of it. It was the most ludicrous sight to see these stalwart men gravely elevating their toes at the ring, which gradually mounted higher and higher, till Mr. Campbell, making an extraordinary bound

and kick at the same time, sent it flying, to the mock dismay of the Friar, who declared seriously he could not have done it—an assertion perfectly uncalled for, as no one for an instant would have imagined him capable of such a feat. But to prove that he, too, had his little accomplishments, he procured a skipping-rope, and persuading two gentlemen to turn for him, gracefully gathered his coat-tails about him, and hopped and danced backwards and forwards like a lively porpoise taking exercise.

The Peninsular and Oriental Company pique themselves on allowing ladies to have any little extra luxury at any time they please to call for it; thus they have on this side unlimited effervescent lemonade, while gentlemen are restricted to soda-water. Ices are sometimes served out to ladies, but gentlemen are prohibited from touching them.

A lady is allowed to have preserve at tea whenever she chooses it, while gentlemen are obliged to be content with the usual horrid salt butter. This was a continual grievance to Mr. Chester, who sometimes persuaded Mrs. Clement to send for preserve as if for herself, and then hand it over to him, much to the disgust of the steward, who, however, could not interfere. Mr. Campbell always said, whenever he felt low-spirited, he always asked for one of those forbidden good things, and felt his spirits revived on being answered, "You are a gentleman, sir." Ladies were also permitted to have wine-and-water on deck at supper, but gentlemen were obliged to descend for it—a rule which they easily evaded by asserting that brandy-and-water was wanted for a lady, and the steward's hopes of a future "tip" prevented his being too sharp-sighted on the occasion.

Among the various costumes and characters we had on board, a Greek priest stood very prominent, both on account of his peculiarly clerical dress and the enormous patriarchal length of his hoary beard ; he also had long wavy hair, reaching to his waist when let down, but generally caught up with combs for every-day wear. He was going on a pilgrimage from Calcutta to Jerusalem, and the gentlemen found they could converse with him in Hindostanee, and liked him so much, that some of them organised a party to accompany him into Palestine. There were also some Arab merchants who traded horses between Bombay and Calcutta, and spent their whole time on this return voyage, when they had no business to occupy them, in smoking, or sitting curled up on one of the chicken-boxes, immovably poring over their only book, which they must have known by heart.



ARAB MERCHANT.

We anchored at Aden very early in the morning, and of course there was an end of all sleep. The vessel was surrounded instantly by a swarm of frantically vociferating Coolies in boats. The Babel of sounds which ensued beggars description. They swarmed up the steamer like cats, and, as I lay looking out of my port, one came face to face with me, after which I shut my window. The dawn was magnificent, the red sun

rising behind some low, dark rocks, bathing the still sky and calm sea with a solemn lurid light, and throwing the tall, black masts and spars of a large ship into wonderful relief in the foreground. It looked just like one of Danby's pictures, and was a singular contrast to the struggling, shrieking mass of life that surrounded our floating home. About seven, Mr. Gordon summoned us, and we proceeded on shore. Fortunately, the night before, we had asked Mr. Campbell to secure side-saddles and ponies for us, and as we approached the long, low, white building that does duty for an hotel, we saw numerous ponies and donkeys being galloped about by tattered-looking Arabs to show off their paces, and our two side-saddles lying on the ground conspicuously. Many of our fellow-passengers had taken up their abode in the verandah, smoking, and

looking as if they had been there a month. After a good deal of fuss about saddling the steeds, and parrying the storm of wit sent after us by those who dared not venture themselves on horseback, we started for cantonments, and had a wonderful ride. We went along full speed. These poor little ponies are, no doubt, accustomed to gallop all the way. How much I enjoyed that ride, although of course we had no habits, and the wind was very disagreeable. Our hair would come down, and Mr. Gordon was astonished at the extraordinary increase of colour in our cheeks. I went into raptures of delight over the strange, wild scenery, and the uncouth but most picturesque natives, all to the great astonishment and bewilderment of our simple-minded friend, Mr. Stafford, who could see nothing to admire, and believed I was joking all the time.

Aden has been so often described an ugly, hot, dusty place, high barren rocks, hot beyond all conception, and dusty beyond belief, without a vestige of vegetation anywhere, yet commanding interest from its very strangeness. Before you enter the cantonments, you pass through a deep fissure, fortified everywhere, and guarded by soldiers. The shops are all in a long line, and all kept by Parsees. We went into each one by turns, looking for veils for the desert. All our inquiries were answered by "None," till at length a man pulled out some antique pieces of figured white and coloured gauzes, and among them we descried two green veils, and instantly pounced on them. We found all kinds of Chinese curiosities here, and insisted on buying some little feather punkahs, to Mr. Stafford's disgust, such things being thought too common in China

for ladies' use. Undressed ostrich feathers may be procured here in large quantities at very low prices. We took a hasty survey of the cantonments and the views around. What an utterly miserable place! People say, "You must either die of *ennui* or take to drinking"—a wretched alternative, certainly; but really it must be very difficult, if not impossible, to preserve one's existence there.

In returning, Nora and I changed horses, much to the annoyance of the Coolie boys holding them, who each declared "it was the other woman." Of course we were everywhere pestered for bucksheesh by crowds of Coolies, who could not even get near enough to touch the horses. We met several of the Dutchmen making purchases. All, being cautious as well as heavy men, were mounted on donkeys. We laughed

heartily at Colonel Brett and Major Hawks, both so tall, and riding such tiny donkeys; they shrieked out as we passed, "Oh, give me back my Arab steed;" while the Friar declared he had spent his whole day in searching for an Araby maid—a being he had read about at home, but could find no resemblance to in reality. No ladies were energetic enough to take the trip but ourselves, and we were really inclined to hiss a party of gentlemen who had actually secured a fly to take them about. When we presented ourselves at the landing-place to take a boat, a noisy discussion commenced immediately among the rowers, each one preferring some particular claim. One man even offered me a fine piece of white coral, as a present, if we patronised his boat. No sooner was our choice made, and we fairly in, than all the others began an indiscrimi-

nate fight of a most alarming character. Some tumbled into the water, some rolled on the sand, an undistinguishable mass of arms and legs. Major Seward and Mr. Campbell clapped their hands and excited them on by every means in their power. When the storm was at its height, a native policeman walked quietly to the scene of action, and, having distributed a few impartial blows, the combatants all rose up, replaced their garments, and went contentedly away.

In the mean time, the steamer had been a scene of great discomfort. The coaling at Aden is a fearful operation. Everybody should go on shore who can manage it; but the Coolies are most amusing. As each boatful of passengers arrived on board there would be a tremendous battle about payment, which usually ended in the English-

man tossing the disputed coin overboard, and telling the Coolies to dive for it. They are wonderful divers, but it seems, for some reason or another, diving has been forbidden, and a policeman stationed in a boat to prevent it. At length some of the natives suggested that, if we went to the other side, they would dive. A rush of passengers took place instantly to the opposite side, where three or four men presented themselves in the water, and dived after any coin thrown out. Sometimes two or three would fling themselves on one rupee. Even a four-anna bit (6d.) they could find; and as this is nearly the last place where Indian money passes, the passengers took the opportunity of emptying their pockets, till suddenly the policeman, evidently suspecting something, made his appearance round the stern, when each native scrambled into his own boat,

striving not to look wet or flurried. Some of these Coolies have extraordinary light hair—no doubt bleached by the sun—of which they are very proud. It is a bright-reddish golden tint, and each lock quite separate, in little ringlets, like the door-mats at home. Nora declared she wanted a specimen, and instantly the desire to obtain one became universal; and as Mr. Farly had been singing to us that Irish song which ends with, “Won’t ye lave us a lock of your hair,” everybody began shouting this out in chorus to every Coolie who presented hair of the desired hue. At first one or two were nearly persuaded to come on deck, but the moment any allusion was made to the hair, they sprang overboard precipitately. In vain we offered a rupee a lock: none would part with the precious commodity. One boy, about ten, came in a new boat, and Major

Seward rushed down to secure and bring him on deck. At first he came willingly, but some of the others, seeing what was going on, flung themselves on him, and then commenced a fearful tug of war. I really expected the poor child would be torn in pieces, one arm in the Englishman's iron grasp, every one on board clapping and shrieking out encouragement to him, while a Coolie hung on to every other limb, and all three screamed a Babel concert round. At length Major Seward gave in, and the poor boy was dropped, sobbing and frightened, into the bottom of the boat, no doubt thinking he had escaped some great danger. Soon after, a light-haired Coolie, who had been coquetting up and down for some time, rowed his boat near, and, boldly standing up, offered some of his wig for ten rupees, which noble offer was received with

derisive laughter, and a shower of incomprehensible wit, such as our gallant countrymen delight in, was poured on him: "Don't you wish you may get it?" "Wouldn't you like twenty?" "Who shaved the donkey?" "Come, now, I call that cheap;" and so on. I was often amused at the stolid indifference with which the officers of the steamer treat all these vagaries of their passengers. They seldom interfere unless particularly asked, and looked on with a calm, benevolent superiority, just as you would regard the gambols of a large family of kittens or an infant school.

And so we left Aden and calm seas, for before dinner was over we got into very rough weather, so that many unhappy individuals were obliged to vacate their seats, every such defalcation being received with ill-suppressed merriment by the others, half of whom, I am sure, were trembling in their

shoes, and dreading every heave of the vessel would compel them to follow the same example. Huge waves followed us, looking menacingly in at the stern windows, threatening every moment to overwhelm the dessert which was tastefully arranged beneath them in the absence of a sideboard. At length, Captain Blair's cabin received a deluge of water, which, after nearly drowning the baby and the Ayah, made its way into the saloon ; whereupon all the windows were ordered to be closed, and the greater number of people on board were consigned to utter misery for two or three days. When I ventured again to emerge from the depths of my cabin, I heard the most doleful accounts of everybody. The poor Friar was completely prostrated ; Mr. Campbell was cheerfully ill at intervals, and always returned to talk with his cap more jauntily

set on his head than ever, as if trying to deceive himself. Mr. Gordon rammed his wide-awake over his eyes, pushed his hands further into his pockets, and walked the decks with a fierce determination not to give in, whatever happened. Major Seward was hopelessly miserable, and strove to disguise his melancholy by eating mixed pickles and chutnie; but in vain. Every roll of the ship produced a deep-drawn and despairing “Oh!” which was most touching. This wretched weather stopped our musical evenings, and they were never resumed. Passing Cape Guardafui, a variety of sketch-books appeared, and the old point was immortalised again and again. What hordes of useless sketches one does accumulate, and yet I never can bring myself to throw the least bit away; the merest scratch brings back in an instant the place, the people, and

everything that was said and done. It is far the best kind of diary. . Just as with a few notes of an old air, "the scene recurs, and with it all its pleasures, all its pains."

Nora was thankful for the stormy weather in the Red Sea, which laid up Mr. Campbell and Major Seward. As she was never sea-sick, she was enabled to triumph over them considerably, and ridiculed and laughed at them in the most unfeeling manner in return for the way they had persecuted her during the fine weather. She was always entangled in endless discussions respecting the obedience owing to the nobler sex, Nora stoutly declaring her determination of preserving her freedom intact; and Mr. Campbell used to tease her dreadfully, always repeating, in a censorious manner, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands." Nora would reply, that she held the latter

articles in contempt, and could not be bothered with them ; when Mr. Campbell aggravatingly asserted it was the inevitable fate of all women, and she would be no more able to help it than eating her dinner. Nora retorted that she had been to India and back, and still was Nora Leslie, and she thought her own name prettier than any she had ever heard. Mr. Campbell would shake his head portentously, and still reiterate his provoking insinuations that it was in store for her ; then, perhaps, Major Seward took it up, saying, "That seeing it was Eve's fault that all mankind had suffered, it was the least women could do to submit peaceably to superior guidance, and keep out of more mischief." This, of course, drew forth a vehement contradiction, and Nora would boldly ask, "If men were so clever, why did not Adam refuse the apple ?"

“Oh,” said Major Seward, “because he was too gallant to refuse when a lady offered him the fruit.” “Serve him right,” said Nora; “he was just as anxious to taste the fruit as Eve, and so was glad to put it on her shoulders, like a shabby fellow.” “Not at all,” put in the inexorable Major Seward; “Adam knew quite well what it would entail on him, but as Eve had already eaten it, he was too kind-hearted to let her suffer alone, and so placed himself in the same uncomfortable position.” This was such a new and startling view of the case to poor Nora, that she was driven to woman’s argument of “It wasn’t so at all.” It was no wonder, therefore, she rejoiced over their forlorn and limp appearance after a day or two’s good tossing. Even though Mr. Campbell made desperate deadly lively attempts at cheerfulness, she was not to be deceived by

the effort, but estimated it at its true worth —a feigned composure he was very far from feeling in reality, and treated him accordingly. Major Seward was in a stage beyond caring for anything that passed, so he enjoyed a temporary immunity from her revenge.

The late heavy sea made many passengers determine to go by Marseilles, and as Mr. Gordon promised to take charge of us through France, we determined to go also, if our passages could be changed at Alexandria. In preparation for their continental trip, many gentlemen began diligently studying the intricacies of the French language, deluding themselves with the belief they would have mastered its difficulties before landing in France. Colonel Brett sat down every day, solemnly and stiffly, before a formidable dictionary, intending doggedly to

learn it straight through, by which time he felt persuaded he should be as much at home in French vernacular as in his mother tongue. Alas! however, for his perseverance, which deserved to have been rewarded, when we reached Suez he had only arrived at the letter "G," and consequently, feeling himself hardly strong enough to venture on mixed conversation, put off his French trip to a future day, and went quietly round by Southampton. Mr. Hughes, after vainly mystifying himself for some days with incomprehensible words, gave up the attempt in despair, and changed his passage from Marseilles to Southampton. We saw Mr. Stafford for some time intently studying a book of French dialogues, which, on looking over, we discovered to contain chiefly such sentences as "She is very lovely," or "Beauty is deceitful;" and laughed him out

of the idea that phrases of that style would be of any assistance to him on a rapid railway journey through France.'

A day or so before reaching Suez, the stewardess came into our cabin, saying the passengers' baggage was being weighed, and all our possessions must go up instantly; and then commenced a rapid collection of all the loose articles in the cabin, which were all, even down to a pair of slippers, tied into a huge bundle made out of a sheet, and carried off. This time, however, by dint of sending some heavy boxes round the Cape, we had kept our luggage within due bounds, and paid nothing extra for it. We were told that all the second-class passengers are weighed with their luggage (for what object I know not), and the Irish nurse and baby weighed fifteen stone.

As the basket in which our cats had tra-

velled down country had been thrown over-board, the purser ordered the carpenter to make a wooden cage with bars in front—a far more convenient and comfortable mode of conveyance for the poor things. On board they were placed in the unoccupied chicken pens, and when we used to visit them every evening to pet and console them a little, we were often assailed by numerous witticisms on the singularity of our choice of pets, cats and parrots being such well-known emblems of old-maidism, our facetious companions remarking that we appeared determined to guard against any deviation from that line of life.

Our last day on board the *Hindostan* was a very busy one, everybody packing up the multifarious articles which, however neat you may be, always get strewed over the cabin, and all preparing for a start. We

were not to arrive till night, and there was no hope of rooms in the Suez Hotel, bad as it is, as they were sure to be full of Australian passengers waiting for their overdue steamer. At dinner, the usual ceremony of returning thanks and drinking the health of the captain and officers was performed; but the captain had contrived to absent himself (of course necessarily). After a most unsettled day, we cast anchor off Suez at seven o'clock. The little steamer which was to take us the remaining four miles into Suez soon appeared, looking absurdly small as it drew up alongside our huge ship; and we felt slightly incredulous when informed that all the passengers and their luggage went in one trip.

The task of moving the luggage, though commenced with great celerity, was not accomplished for some hours; so it was eleven

before we were informed all was in readiness for our departure. In the mean time, the saloon was a scene of some confusion, the cabins being all emptied out, and last arrangements being made. Mrs. Smith was in a most tearful stage of port wine. She had been singing “Rule Britannia,” and, on being complimented, said her forte was sacred music. When we came down to fetch up our parrots, the odour of brandy about her neighbourhood was more than a *soupçon* as she rushed towards us, and, seizing my hands, begged me not to leave the steamer that night, sobbing, and bidding us adieu solemnly. Poor creature! she was not to be allowed to land till daylight. Mr. Gordon took our cats on board, and then returned for us. Fortunately we had some gentlemen with us. How the children managed I can’t conceive, for the scene of

confusion and struggling baffles all attempt at description. Out of a hole in the lower deck you walked along a narrow gangway, guarded by a single rail on one side, then down some steps, which landed you on the little steamer. It was too dark to distinguish faces, and the gangway was full of people, who would cling to the rail, and let you pass as you best could. The deck was so crowded you barely found standing room. Fancy a hundred passengers with all their luggage (and Indians' luggage, too), to say nothing of thirty-five children and the stately Arab crew of the steamer, with a variety of supernumeraries of different kinds, tipsy stewards, and all bundled at night into a narrow river steamer! and even then you can have no idea of the jostling, pushing crowd we found ourselves amongst. Every minute some one would rush down from the ship with some

missing article or forgotten message, and by sheer force fight his way across the deck. The stewardess bounced suddenly down, hastily put a bundle into Mr. Campbell's arms, and saying, "Hold it tight, sir—hold it tight," disappeared. It proved to be a baby; but poor Mr. Campbell did not know what to do with it, or even which end to hold uppermost. I had secured a seat on the corner of a bench when a rush of people came past, and a gentleman, who had been sitting on the rail by me, smoking a cigar, was pushed off, and turned head over heels into the water, his feet positively grazing my shoulder as he disappeared. It was a horrible moment, and no assistance seemed forthcoming. "It is only a Lascar," said a lady near, "and they swim like fish." "It is no Lascar," I replied, "for I saw the soles of his boots as he went over." I looked

down and saw the man swimming strongly for the steps, while his cap was being swiftly carried away into the dark distance, for the current was very rapid; the sea looked cold and black, and I knew it was swarming with sharks. In the mean time, two men had gone down the steps, and a lantern made its tardy appearance. The men caught hold of the swimmer by his hair and collar, but his pea-jacket, &c., were so soaked and heavy with water, it seemed an age before he was dragged on deck; and then, to our astonishment, we recognised Mr. Lane. He tried to laugh and make light of the accident, declaring he never saw anything so pretty in his life, "he went overboard as clean as a knife;" and as he was carried off to the engine-room to be dried, people shook their heads, and thought, had he not been slightly elevated, he would not have gone over at

all. Considering, however, that the bulwarks stopped abruptly where Mr. Lane had been sitting, and for a considerable space on each side of the paddle-boxes there was no railing or protection of any kind, it was rather a wonder some of the ladies or children did not follow his example. Had Mr. Lane not been a good swimmer, he must have been drowned.

The confusion was at its height: every one was begging some one else just to hold a parcel, or look after a child for an instant. I had Johnnie's best hat and feathers committed to my charge. Some one proposed we should try the forepart of the steamer, which was not so crowded; so we fought our way to it. I had an iron cage with some of the little parrots in it, which I opposed to any jostling, and at last we reached the end of the vessel, where a keen east

wind was blowing, and I was afraid the juvenile parrots would take cold, and had to wrap them up in a cloak. On the deck near me sat a lady with a shrieking bundle in her lap, and beside her was the Irish maid with another bundle, while two or three more were laid around her, from each and all of which proceeded the same smothered cries. It was Mrs. Andrews and her children. The poor little creatures had been roused up hastily out of their first sleep and hurried into the steamer, and were loudly testifying their disapproval of the whole arrangement.

At length we got under weigh, but not without difficulty, for after the paddles were in motion, nothing could unfasten the rope which held us to the large steamer; it really seemed as if we should be dragged down-stern foremost by it. Major Seward wanted

to cut it through, but was not allowed to touch it by the Arabs, and just as it was growing serious they contrived to unfasten it themselves, and we got away. Every gentleman began to feel for his keys and think over his baggage, while every mother counted her precious charges, and Mrs. Andrews discovered it was her baby that had been consigned to Mr. Campbell's charge. People began to compare their grievances, and Major Seward was furious. One of the tipsy stewards would smoke into Mrs. Clement's face, and being too far gone to be sensible of moral influence, had to be removed by main force. Each gentleman meant to write a separate complaint to the *Times*; one would have expected that paper, for a month at least, to be the medium of a hot correspondence between the penitent Peninsular and Oriental Company and its

offended passengers, but, alas for the consistency of human nature! not a line relating to the subject has, I believe, yet appeared.

At last we reached the little wooden pier of Suez. The pitch-dark night was only lighted by the flaring torches of two or three Arabs; picturesque enough, if one had time to look about one, but everybody began to rush wildly about, losing his own party, and being taken care of by some one else. Mr. Stasford kept close to me, and, knowing the localities, I made straight for the door of the old hotel, and ran up-stairs to the ladies' saloon, which was untenanted save by a sleeping figure on one divan. Just then Nora appeared with Mr. Campbell, and Miss Grant under Mr. Hanson's charge. Every one kept dropping in, each astonished and delighted to find the others;

and Mr. Campbell shook up the sleeping figure, who proved to be a poor sailor-lad taking a nap while he could get it. All the ladies and children were put into this one room, which was soon quite full, and presented a scene of confusion rarely equalled — thirty-five children, twenty ladies, and about ten servants, with innumerable carpet-bags and baskets, many of the papas of the children passing in and out continually; everybody had his hands full of business; most of the children screaming. Nora and I, being almost the only people with no occupation (as our parrots and cats were easily put out of the way), were ready to assist others. Mrs. Clement, of course, was always to be found where she was most wanted; Mrs. Blair was carried in, almost fainting, poor little Hettie dreadfully frightened, and the baby crying and requiring all the atten-

tion of the Ayah, who was making ineffectual efforts to soothe him, and at the same time to open a huge basket of stores. (This is a striking peculiarity of Indian travellers ; each baby is accompanied by an enormous basket full of nondescript articles of all kinds ; the amount of milk alone, bottled for the desert journey, must have been something marvellous.) I proffered my assistance, and succeeded, with some difficulty, in abstracting a soda-water bottle full of milk, the cork of which obstinately refused to come out. Seeing me looking for something to pull it with, the Ayah silently handed me a hair-pin, no doubt her usual assistant on such occasions. With a pang of pity for the poor baby I tried to remove the cork with the pin, and of course found it a totally useless instrument, but Captain Blair rushing in at that moment with his

hands full, I seized upon him without scruple, as the milk was for his own baby. He took the bottle away, and gave it me back without a cork at all. I administered a spoonful to the baby, who refused to touch it, and then, finding I was more wanted elsewhere, was obliged to stick the bottle upright in the basket and leave it. I pity them when it was carried into the van next morning. Poor Mrs. Young had been brought on shore in a dead faint, with blue lips, and looking like a corpse; but after pouring pure brandy down her throat, and rubbing her stony cold feet, she revived a little. There was no room to lay her down; the most we could do for her was to prop her against a carpet-bag, and put some cloaks under her head. Meanwhile, Dr. Andrews was wandering about, like a perturbed spirit, in search of his

lost carpet-bag, alternately questioning his wife and the nurse as to where it was last seen, and begging some lady to let him see the name on the bag she had converted into a pillow or seat. Captain Blair was charitably engaged in carrying in relays of ham-sandwiches to the famishing ladies and children. Mr. Campbell was standing at the door, playing ball with a number of oranges we had commissioned him to buy for our desert journey to-morrow. He had had a great fight with the Arabs to get two dozen for a rupee. Neither Nora nor I could leave our various patients to attend to him, and he was obliged to pile them on the table, to the intense envy of all the children who were not asleep. Suddenly Mr. Hunter appeared, to say that after searching everywhere, "that little blue carriage-bag was nowhere to be seen;" which announcement

created great consternation in his wife's mind.

"You know, Miss Leslie, it contains the keys of everything we have, besides all the children's powders that the doctor gave me for them to take every evening."

I mentally thought, "You unfortunate little creatures; I fervently hope the bag may not be found to-night, so you may have one less chance of being poisoned."

"You remember, sir," says the nurse, "there were three bags left out, and I handed you the blue one last, as it was most important."

"Go and look once more, my dear," said the anxious mother. But when Mr. Hunter returned again from his fruitless search it was determined that he and the nurse must go back to the large steamer and examine every corner.

Pitying the poor woman her eight miles' row in the dark, all amongst the sharks again, I offered my services to hold the baby during her absence; an offer thankfully received by the poor mother, whose arms were occupied by her sleeping Johnnie. That poor infant! I shall never forget its appearance. It had been very ill on board, and now lay perfectly still and apparently unconscious, and evidently long past the crying stage. I thought it must be dead, and touched its little hand, which was fiery hot and tightly clenched.

“It is not nearly so feverish as it was yesterday,” said the mother, in answer to my look.

“Poor thing!” thought I, “they have not told you.”

A lull of comparative repose followed, till Mr. Hunter and the nurse returned with—

alas!—no bag; and dreadful confusion commenced again, for it was time for the first set of vans to start, and all the passengers to go in them were busy collecting their things, and rousing the poor children from their restless slumbers, to be properly wrapped up before encountering the keen night air of the desert.

I stood admiring the dexterity with which Mrs. Hunter's nurse was rolling up the baby in an infinity of coverings, ending by placing two or three folds of a thick blue veil over its face, so as effectually to prevent its breathing, and, turning the little bundle over to its mother, proceeded to invest Master Johnnie in the same manner. Poor child! fold after fold went over him, till I am sure he could move neither hand nor foot, nor cry if he wished it; and as his father, who had been helplessly looking on also, lifted up the

little mummy to carry him down stairs, he laughed, half apologetically to me, saying, "They think it necessary to wrap him up so."

"He is an Indian child," said the nurse, severely, in answer to my look of astonished commiseration. And so they all passed out.

I could hear poor little Mrs. Hunter, as she took leave of us all, murmuring to herself, "And all the children's powders!" while old Mrs. Bell croaked out behind me, "They don't know how ill that child is. They won't attend to me, miss; but I tell you it can't survive this night."

It did, however, in spite of her prophecy, and I have no doubt is well yet.

The room being now somewhat clearer, we who remained began to make ourselves more comfortable.

"People talk of the luxurious way in

which overland passengers travel," said Mrs. Clement; "I wish they could see us now."

We got a mattress dragged in for Mrs. Young, and she seemed to sleep peaceably on it. Another mattress was shared between three ladies, and, after a relay of sandwiches and oranges, we composed ourselves to quiet till the next set of vans should start. I shall always look back on that night as one of the most exciting I have ever known, during which I got through a greater amount of hard work than at any other time of my life. Too much excited to think of sleeping, I got a carpet-bag for a prop, and sat reviewing the room. I never saw anything so ugly as the Dutch women and children looked. The little Andrewses were lying in all manner of positions on the divan, and looking like marble cherubs. Mrs. Andrews was sitting on the floor, leaning against

a carpet-bag, with her baby in her arms. Dr. Andrews said she had been holding the baby in just that position for forty-eight hours, so I suppose it was easier to her than any other.

“This is the third night,” said she, “that I have spent sitting on the floor with the baby, as my little girl was so ill I was obliged to give her up my berth.”

Poor woman ! what an undertaking bringing home all those children must have been. Every moment one required more covering or its position altering, and all night this sort of colloquy went on: “Peggy, Peggy, get up.” Peggy, being fast asleep, was just roused sufficiently to rock an imaginary baby in her arms. (Major Seward said he was sure she dandled a baby always in her sleep.) “Peggy, you are asleep I think; Miss Annie wants some milk; get up.” A

second glimmer reaching Peggy's brain, she snatched a pillow from under a little sleeping head and began patting and soothing it; on which, Mrs. Andrews giving her a harder push, she woke up, rubbing her eyes, and was directed to find the milk; but when brought, Miss Annie refused to drink it because it had no sugar. "There now, Peggy, you have forgotten the sugar; go out and see if you can buy some from the people of the house." Peggy disappeared, but soon returned, saying, "There was no one up in the house to give her sugar." And as the young lady's still refusing to touch the milk without it evidently distressed her mother very much, I suggested that Mrs. Schneider had some, as I had seen her giving it to her baby. But I was sorry as soon as I said it, for Peggy, scorning to address herself to the little Malay nurse, remorselessly shook up

poor Mrs. Schneider herself, who rose in a very resigned manner and gave out the sugar.

As our batch of vans was to start at four o'clock A.M., Mr. Gordon came to warn us beforehand; and, having collected all our things, we descended to breakfast, and got some good strong coffee. A sleepy Arab brought in an immense bowl full of eggs and some bread-and-butter, for which refection we were charged five shillings a head. Then the extortionate innkeeper levied a tax of a rupee each on every man, woman, and child—even those who had only spent an hour in the house—for the privilege of sitting on the stone floor of his saloon. Considering he has four sets of Indian passengers monthly, upwards of a hundred each time, to say nothing of the Australian mails, I should think his fortune ought to be rapidly made. Now that we were homeward-bound voyagers, we

found a striking difference in the ideas of the Transit Company on the subject of luggage. Long experience has, I suppose, warned them that it is useless to interfere with Indians on this point; and we were allowed to stow our two cages of parrots, the box with the cats, and a leather bag for ourselves, into the van without a word of remonstrance from the driver, while if we had ventured on taking half that amount of packages in coming out, there would have been a great fuss made instantly.

By the time we reached the first halting station, the sun was very hot. The only difference we saw in the desert was that our old friends the semaphores were in ruins, and a bran new electric telegraph ran right across to Cairo. As for the meals provided, they might have been the same ones we left on the tables last year; but the horses had

very little spirit in them, having taken all the Australian and Bombay passengers across just before us. They seemed scarcely able to drag the vans along, and made us so late, that at the middle station, instead of the prescribed rest of two hours, the coachmen wished to hurry us on quickly; but this both Mrs. Andrews and Mrs. Schneider highly objected to, saying their babies required more rest; and having been promised two hours, they would not give up a minute. Towards the close of the day, we began to feel keenly the want of last night's sleep, and Nora was getting thoroughly knocked up; indeed, at the third station most of the children were too wearied to cry even, and the ladies too tired to eat: they could only lie down.

What with the heavy roads and the worn-out horses, it was four o'clock in the morn-

ing before we reached Cairo, as miserable a set of mortals as could well be seen. Mr. Stafford had promised to keep rooms for us, and had actually waited up all night to tell us there was no room at "Shepherd's," and we must go to "L'Orient," where, after many delays, we were at length consigned to our rooms; though not to perfect repose, for we were informed we must be up to breakfast by eight, as the train for Alexandria started at nine; and Nora was by this time too ill to allow of my leaving her till she had fallen asleep. Consequently, I had the pleasure of lying down for about an hour, but not of closing my eyes, as the people in the hotel seemed to be thinking of anything but peaceful slumbers. At breakfast we met several of our jaded fellow-passengers, compelled, in spite of all fatigue, to hurry on. Fortunately, Mrs. Young and

Mrs. Blair had been able to procure an invalid van for the desert journey, so were not as completely dead as I expected them to be. They arrived barely in time to be put into the train for Alexandria; rather trying work for such delicate people.

We reached the station just in time to see the train disappearing, and felt nothing but a sensation of intense relief. I really thought Nora would not have been able to go on at all, and we were both at the moment too tired to care whether we missed the steamer or not. The railway officials seemed exceedingly astonished to hear our exultation at being too late; but as all the Andrews family, Messrs. Stafford, Hayes, and others, were in the same predicament, we were graciously informed that another train would be despatched in the course of the day, though we had at least an hour to wait

while they determined when it should start. However, we were allowed to leave our luggage and all the pets under lock and key, and started with renewed spirits to see something more of Cairo. While we were getting donkeys, we stumbled on our old dragoman, Omar, who instantly recognised and wished to shake hands with us; but, although we declined that honour, he kindly insisted on taking the whole party under his charge, and escorted us to see the lions. The excitement and exercise revived us considerably. The bazaars were of course delightful—living, breathing realisations of the “Arabian Nights;” and our reiterated expressions of admiration seemed as surprising to Mr. Stafford as our delight at Aden had been, he having been too much accustomed to Orientals to understand the pleasure of being jostled by a crowd of dirty Arabs,

and deafened by their noisy cries. We had heard a great deal of the mosque, but could not admire it after Delhi and Agra. Whatever it may have been, it is now irretrievably spoiled by the vulgar mixture of imitation Corinthian pillars, French chandeliers, and tawdry gilding, with bits of the solemn old Moorish-looking railings and carving. Of course we saw the Mameluke's Leap, with which everybody is so familiar, both from description and pictures, and then returned to the hotel to get some tiffin, and started by one o'clock in the railroad. I cannot think why the other passengers were not allowed to wait quietly, and come with us; but it seems the only idea of the Transit Company to hurry you breathlessly through Egypt.

We had a merry party at Khafileh, similar to the luncheon we had there in coming out,

though not as numerous a one as it was then. The Egyptians appear to have an immense appreciation of fun, and, though they cannot understand the point of your joke, will always laugh with you for sympathy. When the Arab waiter came round, after the repast, to collect his bucksheesh, Mr. Hayes amused himself by saying nothing, but staring fixedly at him. The poor waiter, after two or three efforts to break through this stony gaze, gave up the attempt, and no doubt, believing firmly in the power of the evil eye, looked rather doleful about it. But when, just as we were leaving, he received an unexpected half-crown from his tormentor, he instantly comprehended the exquisite drollery of the joke in its fullest extent, and was prepared to believe Mr. Hayes a wit of the very highest order.

The floating bridge across the Nile is now

finished, and was regarded by the gentlemen of our party with intense reverence. It was planned, I believe, by Mr. Stephenson, and looks like a huge platform mounted on two little steamers, with machinery so arranged that it can be adjusted each day to the rise and fall of the river, in order that the same even surface may always be preserved at the top, on which the train is pushed from the shore, and carried over to the other side without giving the passengers the trouble of changing their seats. We crossed very satisfactorily; but after what seemed a most unaccountable delay on the other side, we asked when they meant to go on, and were informed that a telegraphic message from Cairo had just been received, to the effect that two camels, carrying boxes with important despatches from India, having broken down in the desert and been left behind, the

accident had only now been discovered, and we were directed to wait till the missing mails arrived in Cairo and could be despatched to us. This pleasing piece of intelligence effectually put an end to the hopes of a quiet night's rest at Alexandria, with which we had been deluding ourselves. Really we were almost beginning to look upon sleep as a work of supererogation. As one weary hour of the night passed on after another, without bringing the desired train that was to release us from our tedious inaction, we strove to make believe the leather cushions of the carriage were as comfortable as a bed could be; but, as every one knows, when you are anxiously awaiting the arrival of anything that may appear at any moment, all chance of sleep is hopeless. The poor little Andrewses were too much worn out to care further about anything, and Dr.

Andrews had long ago come to the conclusion that it was most unwise for people with large families to think of travelling at all; but fortunately, there being many vacant carriages in the train, he was at present able to separate himself from the cares of his numerous little charges. Some of the gentlemen fraternised with the railway officials, and spent the night in unlimited supper and cigars, hearing innumerable characteristic anecdotes of the road.

After an age of waiting and wondering, we started at last, and were turned out in Alexandria a little after four in the morning, having been fifteen hours on the way instead of eight. An unfortunate individual had been waiting all night at the railway station, with a note from Mr. Campbell, saying he had secured rooms for us at the Oriental, and thither our wayworn party

proceeded, more dead than alive. By five o'clock we had gained our rooms, but not by any means undisturbed quiet, for the passengers who had preceded us were waking up fresh and alert, invigorated with their night's rest, and preparing to make the most of their short time in Alexandria; so our ears were regaled on all sides by short scraps of the "Ratcatcher's Daughter," and other popular melodies, intermingled with shouts for hot water. At six, Mr. Gordon was knocking at our door, informing us we must go off about changing our passages and separating our luggage; and so ended our third night without sleep, and we looked forward to the certainty of undisturbed possession of the two little berths, however narrow, in the steamer with unalloyed delight, a consummation which at home no powers of persuasion would have made me

believe I could ever have arrived at. As we hurriedly resumed our walking attire, we could not resist ejaculating Mr. Campbell's favourite expression of "Hard lines!" We were driven first to the luggage-yard, where a scene resembling the Suez one in our outward route was being enacted. Having selected one or two indispensable trunks, Mr. Campbell, with rolled-up sleeves, kindly proceeded to paint "Marseilles" on each, in letters a foot high, effectually stamping himself on our minds thereby, as it is impossible to this day to efface the letters. We then adjourned to the office, and found the exchange of passage more easily accomplished than we had anticipated, the Company generously giving you back five pounds, which nearly pays half your transit through France. Having plenty of idle time on our hands, we visited Pompey's Pillar, and found it

of course traced all over with the illustrious signatures of Brown, Jones, and Robinson. At Alexandria there are some very good shops, and many of the ladies took this opportunity of providing themselves with the latest fashions; but, as we were to spend a day or two in Paris, we restricted our purchases to light literature, that useful edition, the “Tauchnitz Library,” being procurable in any number.

On reaching the *Valetta*, which was to convey us to Marseilles, we found her a much smaller steamer than we had yet been in; sharp and narrow, with very raking masts and high bulwarks. We were told these latter were imperatively necessary, as she cut through the rough waves instead of rising, and consequently was almost always under water. Having deposited our various belongings in our cabin, we went with Mr.

Gordon to bid a tender adieu to our beloved cats, who were to perform the long sea-voyage. The accommodations on board the *Indus* were certainly first-rate, and when Mr. Campbell returned with us to the *Valetta*, he expressed great pity for our limited space; but we triumphed over him by representing it was but for five days, while the passengers for Southampton could not hope to quit the watery element under a fortnight, and would be nearly certain to have bad weather in the "Bay" besides.

Our dinner party that afternoon was the most hilarious I have ever seen. The Friar surpassed himself, and the Bombayites looked enviously at our end of the table. But, alas! our mirth was of short duration, for the wind commenced freshening that evening, and continued to do so till it blew a gale,

and we were pitched and tossed about unmercifully. The unfortunate Friar, looking forlorn and deplorable, was driven to sit in the saloon, from his cabin, which was forward, being flooded with sea-water, and the contents of his portmanteau floating on the surface. The night before we reached Malta was very bad: Nora was terrified out of her senses; and the passengers, many of them, sat in the saloon all night. About two o'clock there was a terrific shock and crash; the array of small-arms at the end of the saloon came down with a clatter; then a calm for a second, the poor little steamer quivering and trembling like a frightened child, and a few scared individuals started out of their cabins. But next morning we were in smoother water, and a benevolent old lady, in talking over the night's adventures, told us: "When that dreadful shock

came, my first thought was, 'Oh, I hope those dear little parrots have not suffered !'" This lady, with her daughter, friend, and maid, were returning from an excursion up the Nile. It was their second tour, and they had penetrated beyond the fifth cataract, entirely without masculine aid (from their own countrymen at least); as she herself expressed it, "That creature man is utterly useless, and simply in the way." The only article she considered absolutely necessary on the journey was a pipe of claret, the drinking water being so bad.

The weather had been too rough for the *Valetta* to display her powers of speed, and shortly after dropping our anchor at Malta, the stately old *Indus* entered the harbour, and in the streets and shops we were continually meeting our former companions, who vainly pretended to crow over us. The

Pera had just arrived with the English mail, and the meeting of outward and homeward-bound passengers presented an amusing con-



OUTWARD AND HOMEWARD BOUND.

glomeration of styles of dress. The former were in all the agony of stiff "all-rounders," Noah's-ark coats, silky chimney-pot hats, and dandy canes, while the latter wore loose shooting-coats and wide-awakes, with pughees, and a general air of preference of com-

fort over appearance pervaded them all, in striking contrast to the scrupulous neatness of the *Pera* passengers. We laughed heartily at the manly determination with which Mr. Stafford pulled his enormous white gills higher up to his eyes, with British obstinacy asserting his right to hold his own, whatever the fashion might be.

Our passage from Malta to Marseilles was speedy and tranquil, and we had lovely glimpses of far-distant hills and sunny landscapes. Dirty, disagreeable Marseilles presented no inducements to linger, and having passed the custom-house with the greatest facility as regarded our baggage, but finding French uncommonly difficult from the Hindostanee words which would slip out constantly, we took our seats in the train, with great satisfaction at being once more on *terra firma* in Europe; our simple-minded

friend, Mr. Stafford, rejoicing in the discovery of a carriage expressly set apart for smokers, which at once convinced him of the good sense of the French nation.

At Avignon we were turned out for refreshments, and the whole trainful rushed hungrily *en masse* to a long room, where a *déjeuner* was laid out, and cards, affixed to the walls, indicated the moderate sum of 3 fr. 50c. for the repast. But the twenty minutes flew speedily away, and a thin, sharp little woman made a tour of the half-satisfied passengers, apparently extracting the uniform sum of 25 fr. from each, which some were foolish enough to pay without hesitation. As the bell was ringing furiously for departure, she advanced, with a sweet smile, upon Mr. Stafford, and the infatuated youth was about to hand out his sovereign, when I stopped him, saying that, as Mr. Gordon had only

paid that amount for us three, it was a clear case of imposition to demand the same sum from one individual. The waitress instantly lowered her charge to 18 fr., and, as the train was just about to start, he gave it her, and had to endure a shower of facetious remarks from his friends on his having been so completely "taken in and done for," of which fact he was tardy of conviction; but at last it forced itself on his unwilling mind, together with the aggravating clause that "the woman was not even pretty."

On arriving in Paris we at once drove to the Hôtel Castiglione, knowing from former experience that it was a well-ordered household, and, as we had a great deal of shopping to get through, a central position was needful. We could scarcely realise that it was indeed a twelvemonth since our steps had strayed over the Rue de la Paix and the

Boulevard des Italiens. Everything seemed unchanged, and the stream of life and bustle was as rapid as ever. What exquisite silks the "Compagnie Lyonnaise" displayed, and how artistically the windows of the "Trois Quartiers" were arranged. We could hardly tear ourselves away from such fascinations, and were really glad of the excuse of the absolute necessity of buying dresses and bonnets for the approaching London season, till we barely left ourselves money sufficient to pay our tickets to London; and had not Mr. Gordon luckily been able to lend us some coin (he not having equal temptations to expend), our stay in Paris might have been unpleasantly prolonged.

We chose the Calais to Dover route, as presenting the shortest bit of Channel to cross, and were, I must say, most inhospitably received in England by a drizzling rain and

piercing cold, making the poor Indians shrivel into nothing. But everything seemed beautiful to our eyes—the May hedges just budding into leaf, and the honest-looking clods of earth in the ploughed fields—in comparison with the arid, parched sand of India. The London Custom-house officers deserve unlimited praise for the tender manner in which they treated our boxes, such as we had with us, the greater part having gone round by Southampton. But the gentlemen all got into difficulties about their cigars. The French officials had allowed twenty cheroots to each traveller duty free, but the English rules were far more stringent, to Mr. Stafford's extreme disgust. We here bid farewell to kind Mr. Gordon and all our companions, as our routes diverged considerably.

Very few of our friends expected us by

this mail at all, and not one had an idea of our coming by Marseilles; therefore, on driving past the house of a cousin, we positively sent the inmates into hysterics. One of them, happening to be idly standing by the window, recognised us, and, breathless and excited, proclaimed to the household, “The Leslies have come home!” Mamma was out of town, and intended to meet us at Southampton; so we went to an aunt’s house, which was instantly thrown into a frantic state of confusion, not only by our arrival, but the irruption of so numerous a family of parrots, while the servants dreaded the cockroaches, which they were convinced were lurking somewhere.

Mercifully, indeed, were we guided to England’s shores; scarcely in time, for within

a month after our return home the wide-spreading and disastrous fire of mutiny broke out, and wrapped the peaceful scenes of our late wanderings in a sheet of flame. There was no real necessity for our coming home within the appointed time—many reasons might have tempted us to prolong our stay in India—and I believe the fixed determination of purpose which we evinced was regarded by many of our friends as simple perversity. *Now* I can see how providentially all things were overruled for our safety.

I have purposely avoided alluding to any of the horrors lately enacted in Bengal, preferring to give my readers a picture of what India once was—what it may be again, we trust, when the Dove of Peace shall once more fold her wings on its now distracted plains.

It is, indeed, difficult to believe that so

many friendly companions of our past year have really fallen in such an untimely manner, but not so difficult to realise that the light-hearted youths we have so often joked with and laughed at should prove themselves, in the hour of need, heroes of such sterling mettle—heroes whom England may well be proud to count among her sons. Surely the vaunted deeds of classical warriors grow pale and faint before the matchless heroism of our modern Paladins.

And now for our own sex. In times of sickness and sorrow we know of old no true woman's heart ever fails, nor do her spirits flag till the evil day be overpast; but in scenes of horror and bloodshed human eyes have rarely looked upon, we are hardly prepared to find our sisters acting with a calm devotion, and meeting their cruel deaths with a proud submission which,

while it must have nerved the arms of their countrymen around with superhuman strength (alas, that in so many cases it should have been so unavailing!), may well cause us who stand by in security—powerless to aid, while listening to the tale of their bitter wrongs—to wonder, while our eyes are dimmed and our throbbing hearts beat high, if the land that has been thus hallowed by such a baptism of our country's blood shall ever be allowed to pass from the hands of our descendants. Does not the deep heart of England respond, "God helping us, never!"

THE END.

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